

Enemy of My Enemy

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Summary: Takes place during the same time as Halo3: ODST. This story follows two characters, an ODST marine, caught in the chaos of the rupture, and Sangheili Elite female. Both need to team up to survive the chaos.

1. Chapter 1

****Location: New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.****

****Timestamp: October 20****th**** 2552. 23:07 hours.****

>Unit ID: Corporal Jacob Matthews (Male, 26, 5'11"), Orbital Drop Shock Trooper, 7**th**** Shock Troopers Battalion.**

>Status: Functioning, left arm lightly damaged.

"Todayâ€¦ Didn't go as planned." The soldier told himself as he swiped a medkit from the medical station. Many medkits were stolen from these med stations during the evac, but there were some rare ones lying around. Jacob had considered keeping it for later, but the plasma burn on his right shoulder was searing. The rain helped to ease it a bit, and the cool air also applied a soothing sensation, but it still burned and stung like someone had poured pressed a branding iron against it.

He decided to use the medkit now. If he was too injured to lift his arm and use it efficiently, then he needed to use it. He had to be at the peak of his ability, being that he was the only survivor of his squad. The only one he knew had survived that is.

The plan was to eradicate the covenant forces that had invaded, clean up, keep everyone intact, then go back to base for some drinks with the squad. But then again, these plans never go through the way they should.

What they hadn't anticipated was a covenant ship making a slip space

jump at the edge of their city, causing a shockwave that crippled some buildings and flung vehicles and some people hundreds of metres.

In this blast, communications were scattered. The ground teams that were in place were unable to communicate with one another via technics in their suits. The ground teams that may still be alive anyway.

This shouldn't have happened. This was his first rotation in his home town. This should have gone swimmingly. Now his home city was in ruin. His family were likely dead, as were his battalion.

Jacob shook these thoughts away and stumbled, clutching his left shoulder with his right hand and the scavenged medkit in his left. He couldn't afford to think like that. He had to keep his head on straight, do the right thing, and get tactical.

Jacob leant his back against the cold, wet steel wall and slowly slid down into a sitting position. His shoulder now hurt immensely. The adrenaline he was experiencing in battle made the burn feel less agonizing, but now that the adrenaline had worn off, the shock began to kick in, and his body was not happy.

Jacob opened up the medkit and took out the burn gel. No matter how hard he tried not to look at the wound, he looked. He told himself that if he didn't look, it wouldn't hurt and that if he observed it, his pain would multiply.

Oh, how he hated being right.

Jacob looked at the disfiguring plasma burn that had melted his flesh. He suddenly felt pain rocket through his arm, followed by a heavy tingle as he applied the burn gel to his wound.

The tingle was followed by a soothing feeling, more than what the rain or cool air had to offer. Jacob let out a sigh of relief as he looked up at the dark, cloudy sky. He could see raindrops splashing on his visor, and running down the sides of his helmet. This sight mixed with the comforting feeling now emanating from his shoulder and the ssshhhhh sound that the downpour was almost enough to make him smile.

Jacob wanted these few moments to rest, to recap on the events that lead to where he is now. He wanted to know where everything went wrong, what he could have done to prevent it, so that he doesn't make the same mistakes again. This wasn't run in the training simulations. He wasn't trained to deal with a random close range slip space jump from a covenant capital ship.

He looked around at the damaged buildings, observing the destruction that lie in wake of the rupture. Buildings were crippled. Cars and trucks were wrecked, some stacked against one another from the shockwave. Most windows were shattered, but some had remained intact by some incredible feat. The city's debris reminded him of the stories he'd heard of the planet of Reach. He hadn't been there during the invasion, but his cousin was. Regrettably, his cousin perished in the invasion at Reach, but he didn't go out without a fight.

Reach was invaded whilst Jacob was still in training as a recruit. Since then Jacob had trained rigorously to be as good a soldier as his cousin. He excelled in his fire mission exercises and his sniper recon training. He also received honourable mention for his knowledge of medical field skills. He was overwhelmed when he was selected to join the elite 7th ODS Battalion. He was an Orbital Drop Shock Trooper, just like his cousin before him.

His time for reminiscence was cut short by sounds of covenant grunts screaming a few buildings away. Panic attacked his mind. Had he been spotted? Had he made a mistake and left a clue for them to find him? No! Jacob was never that careless! Or maybe! Someone else was!

Jacob grabbed his standard issue M7S sub machine gun, and his M6S handgun was already holstered on his right thigh. He had to see if anyone was still alive, whether it be from his team or not, he had to know. Jacob cautiously approached the edge of the building, being careful not to make any noise to alert any nearby grunts, readied his SMG, and rapidly turned the corner, aiming down sights, just like his years of training had dictated he should do in this situation.

He spotted no immediate threat, but there were two yellow armoured grunts facing down a separate alleyway, snickering to each other. They were easy targets, and they could quickly be taken down without a second thought and without any other enemies being alerted. Grunts could not be shot in the head from behind, unless you were above them. They had a large armoured combat harness behind their head, which acts as a pyramid of defence. However, they do not have eyes in the back of their head, and the harness limited their vision. Jacob was invisible, and now was his chance. He upholstered his pistol and began to stealthily creep up behind the pair of them.

2. Chapter 2

****Location: Covenant Type-52 Troop Carrier (Phantom), Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.****

****Timestamp: October 20****th**** 2552. 19:00 hours.**
>Unit ID: Shay'est [Pronounced: 'Sheest'] (Female, 6'1") Sangheili, Minor Domo.

Status: Functioning, Descending to assault position.**

The stench in the air was familiar, but ungodly. This planet wasn't supposed to be inhabited, but it was, and they were doing a bad job. Humans had polluted the air and despite having the same nitrogen-oxygen air supply the Sangheili home planet has, it smells wrong. The air is filled with gases from vehicles; no doubt their civilization was still burning fossil fuels as a resource, the fools.

Shay'est was nervous. Really nervous. This was her first run in control of a lance (a covenant equivalent of a squad). Her lance consisted of a Sangheili Minor (herself), four Unggoy Minors, and one Unggoy Major (grunts). She had done training exercises of course, to prepare her for this moment, but this was her first time really in the field whilst in a position of authority.

She tried not to think about it. Tried to keep her head in the game.

Find something else to think about. She began to prep her battle gear. Her purple and steel coloured Type-51 Carbine rifle was loaded and prepped, and her Type-25 DER Plasma Rifle was ready to go too. She leaned her neck back against the wall of the phantom and observed her troops.

Two of her Unggoy Minors were playing rock, paper, scissors to see who would get the needler, whilst the other two were prepping their plasma pistols. When she looked over to see what the major was doing, she was slightly shocked to see him watching her right back. She looked away for a moment, fearing that her nervousness might show, and the Major's faith in her battle commands might be shaken.

Shay'est noticed the Major making his way over to her. She began to have a small panic attack. What if he noticed she wasn't mentally prepared? Would he opt for a different leader for the lance and have her miss out? She began to break a sweat, much to her dismay and avoided making eye contact with him as he arrived.

"Are you alright?" The small grunt asked "It's okay to be worried. When I was on my first run as a Major I was worried. Don't be afraid, I'm sure everything will go smoothly. For an operation like this, they would normally put a Major Domo in charge of lances, but instead they have you. That must mean they're not worried and have great faith in you. I do too. You should be fine." The grunt said as he slowly turned around and waddled back to his position.

The Unggoy's words were more than soothing to Shay'est. She felt her eyes begin to well. She had no idea that her lance actually had her back. Her fears were dashed by the Major's words and her will was standing strong again, as it was back in her simulation and training days. Shay'est excelled in her recon and advanced fire fight training. She then used these skills to earn the place she was in now. Today wasn't her first mission, but it was the first time she actually felt important.

She shrugged off the feelings she had of self-doubt and got prepared for her unit to get dropped in the city. In each phantom she was aware of there were 3 units. One lance led by a Sangheili Minor or Major, and two lances lead by Jiralhanae (Brute) Minors or Majors. This was odd, as normally it would be two Sangheili Domo lances and a single Jiralhanae lance, but no matter. Each unit lined up in standard format as the back of the phantom opened for them to step out of.

Walking on this planet's surface was strange. It felt very much like the same home planet Shay'est was from, but she knew it was different and this feeling was discomfoting. She couldn't quite place her finger on why though. Perhaps because she thought about how easily they touched down on this planet a lot like hers, and about how easily it would probably be for others to touch down on her home planet.

No. I can't think like this now. No thoughts of home and of family. I am a soldier in the field now, and have to focus on the here and now. She thought to herself. She brought up her carbine rifle and gave the order for her troops to rally on her and follow her into their first checkpoint position.

The way this invasion was planned out was that each unit was to move to certain checkpoints throughout the city, clearing each area and moving to the next. They were doing this as a full sweep, taking out any enemies they needed to, and to completely leave the city in ruin. The city however was already pretty much taken care of for them due to the slip-space jump that the holy Prophet of Regret had taken in his capital ship. The city now lies in ruin, vehicles flung in different directions and overturned, buildings ravaged and to top it all off, there was a rather large storm brewing overhead, just to rub in the feeling of everything being dead.

The units branched off in their different directions, with Shay'est leading hers north-west of her drop point, staying in formation, stalking through each checkpoint with ease, just like simulation. There seemed to be nothing around. No enemies, no civilians, nothing left alive, not even local wildlife. It was almost unsettling, wandering through the debris of this formerly lively city. The rain began to spit down upon them, and the grunts moved into cover.

Back on the Covenant home planet, the rain can sometimes burn due to the excessive amounts of iron inside the core of the planet, mixed with some of the nitrogen in their atmosphere. The gravity on their planet is 1.375 times the gravity on Earth. More than Earth, but not enough to feel that much of a difference.

As the grunts hid beneath the shelter, Shay'est stood in the open, beneath the rain. The rain on this planet felt nice. It wasn't like the rain back home that was either freezing cold or boiling hot, depending on the season. This rain was a pleasant in-between. She closed her eyes and felt the rain collide with and slide down her body, enjoying the satisfying, plastic-pounding sound of it pelting gently against her armour. Perhaps this planet wasn't so bad after all and maybe the holy Prophets were right to take it for their own.

3. Chapter 3

**Location: Domo Training Simulation Facility 06, Vadam Keep, Sanghelios
>Timestamp: November 6***th**** 2551. 08:43 hours.
>Unit ID: Shay'est (Female, 6'1") Sangheili, Domo recruit.
Status: Functioning, body suffering from fatigue.**

The terrain was muddy and thick. The rain was pelting Shay'est's back, leaving a stinging sensation as it drizzled between her already sweating shoulder blades. The rain was currently at an acidic level, and burned to touch. It was no plasma burn, but it was enough to cause discomfort; enough of which Shay'est and the rest of her recruit team was already experiencing. Their drill instructor had taken them on a run up the Vadam Mountain side and ordered them to bring their heavy gear with them, because you never know when you'll be carrying all of the shit you own when the enemy attacks.

Of course, nobody wanted to say anything, as they feared that they would be silenced by their instructor, or even discharged. They were all heavily overburdened with all of their heavy gear, and still trudging onward. There were a few other recruits who had collapsed under the fatigue and were now spewing their stomach's contents all over the sides of the mountain training path. Shay'est was in the

mood to join them, as her body was about ready to give in, but her drill instructor was watching her, and she had point, leading the pack. If she gave in and collapsed under pressure now, it would show she wasn't ready to handle the stress of leading a lance in combat.

Shay'est had worked very hard to get to her final practical exams, and she wasn't about to give in now. She wanted to be deployed and show her worth to the Covenant Army. She had gone through a lot to get here, and she wanted to finish this. However, no matter how much her mind wanted it and no matter how willing to go on her mind was, her body was straining, and unable to keep up.

She felt her chest burn and her stomach lurch. She was about to vomit. She had no control over this, but was not going to give in like the rest of the recruits who were on all fours at intervals on the path beside them. She felt her throat begin to burn as her stomach contents began to rise through it. She leant down and turned her head to the left to aim it off the path as her body rejected her stomach contents. Her knees began to quiver. Her lower left mouth mandible began to twitch, trying to flick off the small bit of bile that clung to it, but she didn't give up. She was determined to make this, and she wanted to prove to her drill instructor that she was willing to go to great lengths to get it.

She kept running, even as her legs burned. She wouldn't give in. She would show that female Sangheili were just as competent as males in the military. They didn't just deserve computer terminal jobs, or only stay at home housewifery jobs. She was determined to make a difference. She wanted respect, and she was going to do anything she could to prove her worth. When she wanted something, she took it. She didn't wait for shit to be handed to her.

She began to stumble. She didn't want to give up now. She was setting the pace for her team, and she liked it. Her body however, didn't. Her instructor luckily told her to drop out of point for a few moments to let someone else have a turn. She was both relieved by this but also frustrated. She was just starting to show what she was capable of, this was just the tip of the iceberg and the drill instructor wanted her to stop now? She didn't want to, but didn't want to disobey orders, so Shay'est dropped back into third position to let someone else take over. This point leader was slightly slower, thankfully, which gave her a chance to relax into more of a jog. The rain was burning, but wasn't burning too bad, so it eased her muscles and she had a chance to breathe.

After her running drill, her group was given 20 minutes to break and eat something to fill their stomachs back up, seeing as 70% of them had now spat all of their breakfast up on the exercise. Shay'est dumped her gear on the ground as gently as possible, and made her way to the cafeteria. She was hungry and needed the energy, because after her 20 minute break was up, she was back into another exercise.

Of course, she wasn't the only Sangheili female in the army. She joined the table with the other females, making up a total of four of them, including her in this batch of 50 recruits. Of course being a female meant that the males would pick on them, and look down on them to make them feel smaller and weaker, but she wasn't shaken by this. This was her last day of training. Tonight was her promotion to a Minor Domo, and she would make this day a happy one.

She sat and ate with the other females, as they pointed out different males they took a liking to and gave suggestions to one another as to which would be a good mating partner. This was not an odd occurrence, but today the group seemed especially picky about selecting a partner for Shay'est. She wasn't all for this, as she had a firm belief that she didn't need a male to make herself any better and could do it on her own, but at the same time, she enjoyed flirting with the males alongside her female companions. She liked making the males feel like they were bait in her game, and turning them down as they asked her to be theirs. It gave her the satisfying feeling she was superior to them, and wasn't to be toyed with.

However, there was a male she'd had her eye on for some time. She had shared this with the other females in a pact, and they were sworn not to share the details to any other Sangheili. He was a Major Domo, and was being shipped to the invasion of Earth in September. She had discreetly been doing all she could to get on that same mission and doing everything she could to try and organize for her to be placed in the same carrier as him for the month of travel to the planet. She wanted him, and she was going to take him.

4. Chapter 4

****Location:** Checkpoint 04, New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.

>Timestamp: October 20**>th****** 2552. 22:10 hours.

>Unit ID: Shay'est (Female, 6'1") Sangheili, Minor Domo.
Status: Functioning.**

A few hours ago, some ODST troopers from the UNSC forces had descended upon the city. They were not near the same sector as Shay'est, but she still kept alert. Orbital Drop Shock Troopers posed a greater threat than many Covenant forces had anticipated. ODST units are a select few of the most elite units there were. They have served in high tension battles for many years and are seasoned veterans. Appropriately nicknamed "Helljumpers", they are a force to be reckoned with.

As much as Shay'est liked a challenge, and even though she'd already beaten three fake units in simulation, she rather fancied not having to go up against a unit of tanks in human form, so she was sure to mark the landing locations of the units on her map data pad, and continue to the next checkpoint, only a good 10 metres away.

The intercom attached to Shay'est's ear opened up a channel that was strange. It was only gargled static. She wondered if there was a human jamming device nearby, which would likely mean there would be humans nearby. She suddenly became alert, dropped to a ready battle position, and ordered her lance to get her back. They moved slowly in formation through the alleyway to the checkpoint, but before they turned the corner to get there, they heard a scream. A Sangheili scream.

She ordered her team to halt and get ready before turning the corner. After a moment's preparation, the lance turned the corner, weapons ready to fire at any threat. What they encountered was unexpected to say the least. What they witnessed as they rounded the corner was a Jiralhanae and his small lance turn on and butcher a Sangheili led

lance. It was a mindless team killing slaughter.

Shay'est's intercom went crazy. Units from all over were crying out, screaming and panicking. Sangheili units only. They were all being turned on by the Jiralhanae lances and being butchered. This invasion wasn't only about taking the planet for the covenant. This was also about leading the Sangheili into a death trap and culling their race, and if she didn't act soon, she was next.

She quickly gave the order for her unit to turn around and move back to the alley for safety while she thought up a new plan. Thankfully, the military had taught her how to act in this situation in a simulation. Not exactly the same situation, but similar enough to have a guideline on how to move. The lance turned around and moved back into the alleyway. However, fate had other plans.

Upon entering the alleyway the lance came head on with a lone marine, who was obviously scattered and confused from the slip space rupture shockwave. He was confused, but not confused enough to not know what to do. He lifted his assault rifle and began to fire. The lance returned fire and moved out of the way of the bullets the human AR sprayed down the alleyway. One of her grunt minors was unfortunate enough to take one of the first few rounds directly to the centre of the skull, sending his corpse into a half-backflip.

One of the other grunts took a shot to the stomach, keeled over and died as the fire fight continued. The plasma weapons burned up the human and killed him, but Shay'est's lance had taken a severe wounding. She turned around to check if the brutes from earlier had noticed the fire fight, and as she did so, she said "Major, status report."

She didn't get that far through, however. She got up to the beginning of the word 'report', but felt a strong sting from her right side, and fell to her knees with a yelp, her rifle sent sliding across the floor. She looked down to inspect the pain emanating from her abdomen, a few inches above her right hip and found a slice of flesh missing and bleeding. A bullet had grazed her in the confrontation with the marine. If it had been only an inch or two further to the left, she would be dead or dying.

The major hurriedly hopped over to her and then ran back over to the human's corpse to search for healing supplies. There were none. He informed her that he would search for some, and left the two remaining grunts with her to stand guard as she tried to maintain her wound on her own until full medical help returned.

This would have been great, however these two grunts immediately dropped their guard and began to debate over whether or not this would have happened if a male Sangheili was in charge of the lance. Shay'est was silently infuriated as the two of them giggled at her injury. She felt like dispatching the two of them herself, but due to their lowered guard, somebody else had beaten her to it.

A human soldier leapt from behind one of the grunts and violently, but accurately placed his steel combat knife into the neck of the grunt he pounced on, raised his pistol and placed an equally accurate shot into the head of the other grunt. He removed the knife from the first one, and watched as the rain cleaned the bright blue blood off of the blade.

"Another two easy kills. I'll have to add those to the scoreboard for the boys back home." He said proudly to himself as he chuckled and put his knife and pistol away.

Shay'est had kept quiet and hadn't moved the entire time, hoping that the marine would think she was dead or at least not worth his time. She looked up to see him turn away and start walking off. She gave a sigh of relief, but she quickly silenced herself on fear of him possibly hearing her.

The human stopped in his tracks. He slowly turned his head to the left, his body slowly following.

Oh no! This is it. Where are you Major?

She panicked. She desperately tried in vain to reach for her rifle that had slid away during her fall. Tears welled in her eyes. Not like this. She couldn't die like this. She had worked so hard to get where he was. She continued reaching and crawling slowly, but the human had already walked over and beaten her to it.

The human kicked her gun away and crouched down to her level. He placed his hand on her shoulder, and Shay'est lifted her head so that her eyes met his helmet. He was an ODS trooper. A helljumper. A walking killing machine. The thing she feared she would run into on this mission. She winced in pain and fear. This was the end. She began to shiver.

"Hi."

!_Wait! What?_

She looked back up at the human. Did he really just say hi? A greeting? And in a calming tone, no less? What? What was his plan? What was! Why!

Shay'est's vision began to blur. She began to feel weak, her limbs dropping and her eyes slowly closing. She had lost too much blood. She was passing out. How shameful, losing consciousness in the face of an enemy. She knew she was doomed when she saw his helmet, but this was ridiculous. Everything around her began to fade to black. Slowly, surely, she fell into a state of unconsciousness.

5. Chapter 5

**Location: New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.
>Timestamp: October 21***st**** 2552. 00:54 hours.**

>Unit ID: Corporal Jacob Matthews (Male, 26, 5'11"), Orbital Drop Shock Trooper, 7***th**** Shock Troopers Battalion.

>Status: Functioning, left arm healing.

Jacob detached his survival kit from his suit, which included a small napalm flamethrower. He had gathered a bunch of rubble and debris and formed a small campfire. He then sprayed a small burst of napalm into the centre of the campfire arrangement. Not enough to start a huge flame and get attention, but enough to keep him and the! Well he

wasn't sure whether to call her 'friend' or 'foe' quite yet, as she had been unconscious since their meeting. He thought if he tried to keep his cool around her when she woke up, she would view him as less of a hostile. Hopefully.

He had carried her to the interior of the wrecked building and up the stairs onto the second floor. That way hopefully no brute led ground units would walk past and spot them. This was no easy task. She was much heavier than she looked. Despite being lighter than other elites due to her build, this one was still particularly heavy.

Jacob had done the best he could with his scavenged medkit to clean and dress her wound to stop the bleeding and sew it back up. He was sketchy on his elite biology, so he wasn't sure if any vital organs had been damaged, but the bleeding had stopped from the wound, she still had a pulse and was still breathing and that was a good sign.

Being that he was good with medical field training and was particularly good with bullet and knife wounds, he knew what to do with the bullet graze, and as a result she may likely survive. But why would he want her to? She was the enemy that's invading. Maybe he felt sorry for them due to the fact that it seemed like there was a civil war going on against them in the middle of their big war. Poor bastards had no idea how much of a shit storm they'd dug themselves into from the beginning.

Jacob stood and wandered over to try and gently carry the wounded covenant elite closer to the fire to keep her warm. He wasn't sure if their bodies worked the same way humans did. Sangheili biology was a subject he was quite poor in. He thought it couldn't hurt to try however. As soon as he made contact with the elite, her eye burst open, took a moment to focus and then locked on him, the rest of her body remaining motionless until now. Jacob took a few steps back slowly and sat back down. Now that she was awake, he had nothing to worry about.

Shay'est was startled. All she saw was an ODSST marine standing over her. She panicked and reached for her weapon. It was not there. She panicked more and quickly grasped for her leg mounted backup energy sword. It was small and only for emergencies, but it did the trick. She activated it and attempted to stand up and look as threatening as she could. She opened her mandibles to show her mouth and crouched in the best attack pose she could muster, but the helljumper was unfazed. He couldn't care less that she was threatening to attack him. He just sat there and ignored her, taking out his ration pack and preparing a small meal.

"I'd be more careful if I were you." He said unnervingly calmly. "I just stitched you up about 10 minutes ago. If you break them open acting like a fool, you'll regret it. I only had the one medkit to spare." He said before digging into his unappetizing looking military ration pack.

Shay'est kept her guard up, but chanced a glance at her wound. Much to her amazement, the wound was indeed stitched and dressed quite well. She remained adamant in her pose and readied her sword for attack.

"Listen honey, if I wanted to kill you, I'd have done it in your

sleep." He hesitated for a moment as he realized that this sounded hostile "Hang on, that came out wrong. But if you think about it, you know it's a logical argument, right?" He said with his arms up in a surrendering position.

She lowered her guard slightly, but still kept her stance. She was unsure of this human. What were his intentions? Why had he healed her using his only medical materials? Medical materialsâ€¦ His medkitâ€¦

The Majorâ€¦

She began to wonder if the Major had returned from his scavenger hunt for the medkit. If he hadâ€¦ Did he run into this ODST unit? Did the marine kill him? He killed her grunts, and took great joy in doing so. Maybe he had something special in store for her, and she didn't want to find out what. Shay'est readied her sword for a standard swipe.

"Trust me, that's not a good idea. If you bust your stitches I'll have to patch you up again, and there's nothing more annoying than having to restitch an already stitched wound, trust me. It's not pretty. I wouldn't recommend hurting yourself any further." He said, placing his food on the floor.

She clearly planned on attacking him. Probably out of rage, or revenge for the grunts. He readied himself to defend, but he knew already how it would play out. He was good at battle meditation and foreseeing enemy attacks. He knew every move she was about to make, even before she did.

Shay'est lunged at the marine, her sword held in her right arm above her head. This put strain on the stitches and she felt the wound pull, but she continued her assault anyway.

"I tried to warn you." He said with a sigh.

The ODST marine parried the elite's attack and spun effortlessly between her arm and her, pulled her arm toward him and twisted her wrist, disarming her. This pull toward him however provided enough stress for the stitches to give way and the wound ruptured again, causing the Sangheili to yelp and clutch her side.

Jacob gave an exasperated sigh and said "Told you so."

"Shut up human! Ouch." Even talking made her wound hurt. She knew she'd made a mistake. Deciding to match her close combat skills with a veteran of the subject was a poor idea. Now she was paying for it.

"Oh, she speaks." The human feigned surprise "You got a name? Or should I just call you 'Crazy Bitch'?" He laughed.

"Hehâ€¦ You wouldn't be the first, human." She clutched her wound tighter. It hurt more with every word she spoke.

The trooper glanced at the wound, sighed and said "Come on, let's get you stitched back up, Crazy Bitch."

The pair of them moved to where Jacob's food was earlier and he laid

Shay'est down on the floor, outstretched. This way the wound wouldn't open again the moment she sat up and hopefully she wouldn't decide to attack him again if she was lying down. He failed to see the logic in his previous thought, but continued anyway. It wasn't like she could do anything to damage him anyway. She wasn't in any condition to, even if she did have a chance to begin with.

6. Chapter 6

****Location: Numbuoy Apartments, Level 1, New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.**

>Timestamp: October 21st**** 2552. 01:00 hours.****

**>Unit ID: Shay'est (Female, 6'1") Sangheili, Minor Domo.
Status: Functioning, Abdomen wounded.****

The floor of the apartment was cold. When Shay'est's back came into contact with it, she flinched, but then adjusted her body to the feeling and lied down more calmly. After they laid her down, Jacob removed his helmet, placed it on the floor and activated its mounted flashlight. He then aimed the helmet at the wound so he had a better view of what he was doing.

"Okay," the ODSST said "This time, it's going to hurt more, because I told you not to tear it open but you decided to anyway. That and you're awake this time, so you'll likely flinch and cry so I'll have to be careful of that."

"Hey!" Shay'est said, offended "I may be a woman but I'm not that much of a wuss!"

Jacob smirked and tapped the wound with his index finger, causing her to pull her right leg up and yelp an _ow!_ "Mmhm." He said. "Not quite buying that one."

"Just shut up and get this over with." She said, not sounding too happy.

"Alright, easy there girl." He said, placing a hand on her stomach to attempt to calm her down. To his surprise, it worked and she lowered her right leg back down. Slowly, to avoid stretching the wound more. "There, much better. Now, let's get you fixed up."

His training had taught him to try and make small talk, but at the same time stay focused. This will usually help to calm the patient and prevent any aggravation.

"So, you still haven't told me your name, Crazy Bitch." He chuckled.

Shay'est hesitated for a moment, then said "I don't know yours either, but I still haven't asked."

Jacob smiled and motioned to invite her to shake his hand and said "Jacob. Corporal Jacob Matthews."

She hesitated to accept his invitation at first, but eventually decided that an ally in the situation she was in would be most helpful. She took his hand in hers, her two fingers placed in the

palm of his hand, and her two opposable thumbs wrapped around it.

"Shay'est. Minor Domo Shay'est." She smiled back.

Female Sangheili had different mouth structures to that of the males. Their mouths were completely closed, with the four small mandibles, each about a third the size of the males, protruding from the sides of their mouths. They had more detailed muscle structure in the mandible jaws, and as a result were able to smile or frown when the situation called for it.

Jacob snickered.

"What are you laughing at?"

"Oh, nothingâ€¦ Just that your name uhâ€¦ Sounds a little like uhâ€¦ Wellâ€¦ The word 'Shit.'" He couldn't help but laugh as he finished his sentence.

Shay'est scoffed and laid her head back down, side against the floor. "Very mature, human."

"What? I have to try and get you to smile somehow."

"Oh? And why is that?" She cocked an eyebrow.

"Wellâ€¦" He smiled at her "I like your smile. And the universe would be a nicer place if everyone shot smiles at each other rather than bullets or plasma." He said, getting back to work.

Shay'est stared at him. Not an angry stare, but a surprised stare. Jacob's face went red and he began to laugh. "What? Did that not make sense to you?"

"No, it made perfect senseâ€¦ It's justâ€¦" She looked down "I just didn't expect a human to think like that. It's something my mother used to say to me back home when I first joined the Covenant Army."

"And why would a human not be able to think like that?" He asked, placing a hand gently on her stomach and tilting his head to the right, grinning. "We're a lot alike, you and I. We aren't exactly polar opposites." He took off his gloves, because they were getting in the way of his stitching.

"Oh yeah? How do you figure?" She giggled back. Talking with his human wasn't as bad as she thought it would be. She'd actually come to form a pretty decent alliance with him.

"Well for one, we both joined our militaries, likely to fulfil our own goals." He nodded at her, before continuing his work.

"Heh, well that's true I supposeâ€¦" She chuckled back, still watching him.

"That, and we're both awesome fools." He laughed.

Shay'est joined him in laughing. She must agree with that point too. She did end up busting her wound open even after he warned her

extensively not toâ€¦ And that certainly wasn't the first mistake she'd made in her military career.

"There, all done!" Jacob said as he snipped the last bit of stitching away from the finished wound. "Now, that wasn't so bad was it?" he smiled.

"Haha, no. If only the medics on our planet were as good as you." She giggled.

Maybe this human wasn't so bad after all. He had a sense of humour, he was charming, and was a decent warrior and medic. Not too bad for a human. He seemed well kept too. His skin wasn't scarred in any visible way, and his brown, short hair was kept in decent condition. He appeared well groomed and seemed to have good personal hygiene.

Hygiene was something she needed to fix up. Hers was in pretty bad shape at the moment.

"Um, do you know if the water's running? I'd like to take a shower. I'm all sweaty and covered in bloodâ€¦ It's not exactly comfortable." She blushed slightly.

Jacob looked down at his blood soaked hands "Yeah now that you mention it, I kind of feel weird talking to you this casually with your blood all over my hands."

The two of them laughed, and Jacob told her not to go anywhere. He got up and went to see if the showers or the water in any of the rooms were working. The shock wave should have knocked out the water as well as the power, but it couldn't hurt to try.

7. Chapter 7

7.

****Location: UNSC Recruit Training Headquarters, New Mombasa Military base, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.**

>Timestamp: July 31*st** 2548. 06:00 hours.****

**>Unit ID: Corporal Jacob Matthews (Male, 22, 5'11"), UNSC recruit.
Status: Functioning, tired from night out.****

The alarm blared louder than Jacob had thought possible. He groaned as he swatted at the top of the alarm clock. His dorm mates were all groaning and telling him to 'shut the damn thing off already!' After about his fifth swipe he managed to turn off the deathly siren, and followed by dragging himself out of bed.

The dorm rooms slept 4 recruits. They shared the one bathroom and had the one room to sleep in. Jacob was lucky enough to snag the dorm room closest to the mess hall. The dorms were divided by gender. The male dorms were east of the mess hall, and female dorms were west. Males were able to go into the female dorms, and vice versa, but no inappropriate behaviour was tolerated. A couple of times now males have been discharged from their training for going into the female dorms and acting immaturely.

The pubs were the place to go for immature, inappropriate activities. However, even that was a risk because if you were doing something foolish in uniform and your CO showed up, that was it. You're gone. It was too risky for Jacob; although his friends didn't seem to mind getting drunk and fooling around a bit. Nothing harmful, but causing a minor annoyance. Walking up to girls, asking them to dance (all the while blowing their breaths that stank of alcohol in their face) and getting rejected and slapped.

There was one friend of Jacob's in particular who was so unpopular with the ladies that they decided to ironically name him "Romeo". There was already an ODST trooper with that nickname however, so try as they did to make it his call sign in battle, they could not. Command wouldn't allow duplicate call signs. Each recruit unit was allowed a call sign for their squad to call them by. Jacob's call sign was "Shadow".

His squad-mates nicknamed him that after a CO approved free for all training skirmish they had one night, in which he came out on top. Note that this does not necessarily mean he was the best unit in his squad however; he was just the best when it came to stealth. The team was dropped off from a warthog troop transport vehicle individually at certain spots in a forest, blindfolded by their visors. Once they were all dropped off and the truck had made its way out of the area, their visors were unblocked, and they had to hunt each other down. Last man/woman standing wins.

Each member of the five person squad was given an SMG and pistol, both only training weapons with rubber bullets. This meant they didn't kill their teammates, but left a hefty bruising on them. Last one left alive won the skirmish, and was allowed the next day off from early morning exercise activities. And the rounds at the pub for that night were on them.

When Jacob's visor unblocked, he immediately readied his weapon, followed the warthog tracks back in the direction they came from, and one by one picked off his disoriented team mates. He resorted to climbing trees and jumping down with his blunt knife or shooting in the air to draw them near, then stealthily picking them off.

Jacob's squad consisted of himself, Curtis "Romeo" Stevens, Courtney "Havoc" Smith, David "Tank" Remmings, and Martin "Techie" Hamming. The four men in the squad shared the same dorm, and Courtney was in a dorm in the middle of the female camp. Courtney however may as well have been listed as staying in the dorm with the men, as she spent almost all of her time with them, and barely any in her own dorm.

Jacob sluggishly pulled his body up off the floor and trudged toward the dorm bathroom. Everyone was still in bed stretching and yawning and moaning. Every morning after their nights at the pub ended like this; hung over, cranky and ready to take out their frustration on their training courses. Oohrah. After taking two steps toward the bathroom Jacob tripped over something that moved and plummeted chin-first toward the ground.

"What the fuck, dude? Watch where you're going." Courtney crankily groaned from her sleeping bag, rolling around on the floor clutching the ribs that Jacob kicked.

"Get off the floor then, fool. You aren't a dog. Or are you?" Jacob cheekily said, winking and giving a thumbs up to his captain, who was having a fling with the female squad-mate at the time.

David smiled and winked back with an "Eyy." Before rolling back over to get himself out of bed. He was very laid back, but took charge when he needed to and knew what to do. He was nicknamed "Tank" because he was able to take down a large amount of enemies and take a lot of hits. David was like a walking brick wall with guns attached. It seemed like nothing could take him down.

Martin Hamming was the newest member of the squad. He only joined up a month ago. He was particularly gifted with technology and throwing together makeshift weaponry and supplies in the battlefield. His abilities with technology gave him the call sign "Techie". They wanted to nickname him MacGyver, but somebody had already taken it. It was harder than they had anticipated getting the nicknames they wanted for newer members.

Curtis Stevens was particularly good with sniper rifles and recon. He was able to calculate wind speeds and take a clean shot from 900 yards. With a non-zoomed scope. He was an uncanny marksman, the best of their batch of recruits. Jacob always admired him for that, before Jacob became an ODST marine, trained to be the best of the best in all areas.

When they started out as recruits, they had no idea they would be together for so long. Now they were together as ODST units, still in the same squad, years later. David had become a Captain; the highest rank of the group, Curtis became a Lance Corporal, Martin worked his way up to a Sergeant, and Courtney had earned the rank of Gunnery Sergeant. They learned to survive together and would fight to the death together should fate give them the chance. They were allies until the very end. You live as a squad, you die as a squad. Oohrah.

Jacob had finally made his way to the showers in the dorm. He put out his arm, ready for the water to make contact, and turned the tap with his other hand. He heard the pipes squeal as the water made its way through them toward the shower head. He always enjoyed that sound, and didn't realize how much he would love to hear it in the future.

8. Chapter 8

8.

**Location: Room 51 bathroom, Numbuo Apartments, Level 1, New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.

>Timestamp: October 21**st**** 2552. 01:06 hours.**

>Unit ID: Corporal Jacob Matthews (Male, 26, 5'11"), Orbital Drop Shock Trooper, 7**th**** Shock Troopers Battalion.

>Status: Functioning.

When the familiar sound of water squealing through the pipes made contact with Jacob's ears, he gave a sigh of relief. He thought it was a miracle that water was still flowing in this place. The

electricity was dead but the water still worked. He quickly washed the elite's blood off of his hands before he went back to get her.

He shut off the shower and flicked the water off of his hands. He didn't want the hot water to be wasted, as there was no electricity. This meant the hot water systems wouldn't be working. Shay'est would be quite pleased to know that the water was working. She needed a shower quite badly; not just for her hygiene, but also to calm her nerves. She was probably very confused and stressed, and this shower would do her some good.

Jacob made his way back to where they had previously made camp to find Shay'est holding his helmet; the flashlight turned off and was viewing her reflection in the visor. He still wasn't entirely sure why he had saved her. He felt she deserved an honourable death, having made it this far. He thought she may have been caught up in the rupture shockwave too, and having survived that, she deserved to die a proper way, not by bleeding out in some alleyway after being hit by blind fire.

This didn't mean he wanted to kill her, but it did mean that this saving her life thing had better not be a recurring scenario. She wasn't exactly light, and having to carry her to safety in a live gunfight might not go down as well as it did just now. He hoped that she may be more resilient in future enemy-involved situations.

Shay'est was still lying down on her back, holding the ODS helmet above her head. Staring deeply into its visor. She couldn't believe that this was nearly the last thing she would see. She gently ran a hand over the stitching on her right side where the bullet had previously torn through. After it had been stitched up, Jacob had put a clear bandage over it to keep it protected from infection.

Why did he help me? Why not kill me when he had the chance?
Shay'est found herself contemplating.

"Hey," Jacob said as Shay'est quickly moved her hand away from the wound, startled by his arrival "Shower works. You want the first one?" He said with a smile.

"Uh, yeah. Thank you." She bowed her head respectfully.

"No problemâ€¦" Jacob said, a little put off and confused by her show of respect "Remember to keep the bandage on. We don't know what kind of nasties could have gotten into the water supply from the shockwave." He snickered.

"Nasties?" Shay'est tilted her head as she stood up.

"Germs. Bacteria, anything. Could be dirt in the system, could be small bugs even. A shockwave like that was sure to have knocked a few pipes loose somewhere. Then again you should be alright. The water seemed clean enough to drink." He smiled reassuringly.

"Well, thank you." She muttered as she walked past. "I'll be sure to keep the bandage on. Oh by the way, your helmet was making noises." She kept walking without looking back. "Could be your fellow killing machines."

Jacob quickly scrambled for his helmet, his heart suddenly racing. Could it be? Could someone in his squad still be alive? Thank goodness. If they had died he wouldn't know what to do. He flicked on his communicator and spoke, now desperate to make contact.

"Hello? _Hello? _Is someone out there? _Anyone?_" He shouted into the microphone inside his helmet.

What came through was mostly static, but he could make it out. "-lo? Hello? -static- Its Techie, is -static- you Shadow? You're alive?"

Jacob's eyes widened. Techie was alive somewhere in the city! _There was still hope!_

"Jesus Martin, you alright? Have you found David or Courtney or Curtis?" He concernedly asked.

If he was with the rest of the squad, they could come to him, but if Techie was on his own, he wasn't the greatest at combat. Jacob would have to go to him for them to regroup. What came through the radio wasn't exactly reassuring.

"No, you're -static- first one I've -static- into contact with. I've messed with -static- transceiver so that the -static- communicator -static- works under the radar." Techie replied through the helmet.

"Dude, I can barely hear you." Jacob yelled into the microphone again. Hoping that if he yelled, Techie would hear him better. This was not the case.

"Hang on. I'll -static- something. One sec." He said back. Jacob waited a few moments for him to speak again. About 30 seconds later he responded, now whispering. "Better? I can hear you fine by the way, no need to shout."

"Yeah, I can hear you clearly now. What happened? Why are you whispering?" Jacob said at a normal tone of voice.

"Some brutes just walked past. I'm hidden behind a trash can in the plaza. I can probably take them." Techie whispered, afraid of being caught. He required the element of surprise to fight efficiently. He picked off his targets fast before they could regain their orientation. In a fair fight against two brutes, he would be screwed. He was surprisingly delicate.

"Negative. I want you to stay alive. No risk taking. I found a new ally, and we'll come and get you. Send your location to my navset and I'll be on my way soon. Can you do that?" Jacob said, once again concerned about his squad-mate.

After a moment of hesitation he heard a "Roger. See you soon." Then the communicator cut out. Whatever modification Techie was using to communicate, it was very unstable. Moments later a bleep noise came through the helmet's communicator, and a beacon appeared on his fuzzy city map.

Jacob got his weapons ready and got prepared to go after his

teammate. Once he had his weapons and gear prepared, he slowly made his way over to the first room in the hallway. The one that Shay'est was showering in. He needed her help to continue. She might know routes which the brutes might miss, and thus could guide them out of danger. She could also ensure that the spot Techie was hiding in was really safe, and if so for how long.

9. Chapter 9

9.

****Location: Room 51 bathroom, Numbuo Apartments, Level 1, New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.**

>Timestamp: October 21** 2552. 01:10 hours.****

**>Unit ID: Shay'est (Female, 6'1") Sangheili, Minor Domo.
Status: Functioning, abdominal wound healing.****

Shay'est adjusted the water to just the right temperature. Once it was running, she began to remove her armour. First came the helmet, then the chest and arm plating, her thigh guards, and finally her boots with shin guards. Her body contained all of the same basic bodily features humans had. She wasn't exactly flat in the chest area, and had some decent mass to her trunk. She was quite popular amongst the males back home, and she knew it. She quite enjoyed using that against them when the opportunity arose too.

She slowly placed one hand under the water. Feeling it collide with her palm and run down her bare arm. The warm water drizzled down her forearm and dripped from her elbow. The showerhead was making a loud squealing noise. She wondered if this was normal or if some poor miniature animal had gotten itself trapped in the pipes. The Sangheili plumbing never made this kind of sound. Perhaps it was faulty human design, as the water seemed to be flowing normally enough for nothing to be blocking its path.

She carefully placed one foot on the cold tiled floor out of her boot plating, and at the same time felt a chill erupt up her scaly but fleshy body. She took her foot off of the cold tile, but then placed it back down once some warm water had rolled over it. Her arm was now under the water's spray up to her bicep.

Another chill shot up through her body and she decided to completely enter the warm water's comforting embrace. She closed her eyes and let the water wander her body. The warm liquid streamed into each crevice easily as she let the shower head spray directly on her face. She enjoyed taking showers. She enjoyed the relaxing feeling it gave her. She also enjoyed the pleasant scent of the water.

It also gave her time to think and contemplate about recent goings on. She found herself wondering again why her new found human ally had chosen to spare her. They were at war, were they not? How could his superiors allow him to do such a thing? Or perhapsâ€¦ Did they not know the two of them had come into contact? Perhaps Jacob's Commanders had not given any orders to him to kill Sangheili, or maybe they had no contact with him at all and were scrambled from the rupture.

She began to rub her hands across her torso, gently helping the water

to reach all of the places it had to for her to be completely clean. She was especially gentle when she came to the repair work Jacob had done. She looked down at the stitched and covered wound with a smile. She had a gentle laugh at herself and continued to wash. If all humans were truly as kind as Jacob seemed to be, she might have a better chance switching sides. Especially considering what she had witnessed in the alley with the Jiralhanae and the other Sangheili squad. What was that about? Did it have something to do with the gargled message that came through the intercom?

She shook off these thoughts and returned to washing herself. No need to worry about any of that right now. This was shower time. This was her peaceful time. She also enjoyed showers because she had privacy. She was alone and didn't worry about others shooting or barging in on her. Or, so she thought.

Shay'est heard the bathroom door fling open without warning. She quickly spun around to see what had happened. Had the Jiralhanae found them? Perhaps one had snuck past Jacob and caught her off guard. She had no weapons. A Sangheili couldn't handle a Jiralhanae in hand to hand combat, especially wounded. She would be torn apart!

Shay'est shut her eyes and screamed in a moment of panic so that maybe Jacob would hear her and come to her aid once again. Almost as soon as she began to scream, a figure lunged at the curtain and burst through. It was smaller than a Jiralhanae, but just as fast, if not faster. It came right at her and reached up, placing a hand firmly over her mouth to muffle her scream. She opened her eyes to reveal her attacker. It was Jacob, with a horrified look in his eye and one hand also on her shoulder.

"Oi! Do you want them all to hear you and find us? I don't feel like fighting anything right now!" Jacob whispered loudly.

Jacob's eye kept blinking to keep the water from entering his eye and messing with his vision. It took him a moment to realize what had happened. When he did, his eyes widened and his face went very red. She was naked. He had barged in on her in the shower.

When Shay'est realized that Jacob could see her bare body, her face also began to heat up and blush. Jacob felt the blood rise to her face through his hand as she began to turn a bright purple. The blush revealed black freckles across the skin beneath her eyes. Jacob told her he was going to let her go, and not to scream. She nodded slowly and he released his grip and backed off, averting his gaze from her flesh. As curious as he was, he didn't feel like turning his only current ally against him.

"I apologise. I should have waited until you were finished before I came for you." He sputtered quickly "I also wanted to tell you one of my squad-mates is still alive and need you to help me look for him, okay?" He said in the most calming tone he could muster.

Shay'est's hands found their way to her private areas to conceal them. She was still purple and tried to keep her voice down as he had asked. "Okay." She quietly replied.

"Alright. I'll let you finish. I'll be out there if," Without realizing, Jacob found himself sneaking a glance at her dripping

body. He quickly looked back away. "If you need me for anything, bye!" He finished rapidly and he ran out of the bathroom, closing the door behind him.

Shay'est was in a state of shock. A million things scrambled through her mind. Why would he barge in like that? From excitement of finding out his friends were alive? Yes that must have been it. How much of her had he seen? Surely she had covered herself before he saw too much. She shook this thought away immediately. She wanted to spare herself as much embarrassment from this situation as she could.

She continued to feel the water run down the side of her body still under the water, and decided to finish showering. Hopefully now she would have no further distractions and could wash in peace.

10. Chapter 10

10.

****Location: Numbuoy Apartments, Level 1, New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.**

>Timestamp: October 21st**** 2552. 01:22 hours.****

>Unit ID: Corporal Jacob Matthews (Male, 26, 5'11"), Orbital Drop Shock Trooper, 7th**** Shock Troopers Battalion.**

>Status: Functioning.

Jacob was looking out the window, over the street and observing the alleyway in which he rescued Shay'est. He was now wearing his helmet and had his visor on. This was partly due to the fact that his visor allowed him to see things clearly at night, as it outlined objects with a banana yellow coloured line to help see where he was going during night ops. This was also partly due to the fact that he wanted to cover his face until it stopped being redder than a tomato.

"What the hell is wrong with you? Just because you get good news, doesn't mean you should burst into a bathroom whilst a woman is showering and tell her. I should have waited. _God_ I'm an idiot. She'll probably never trust me again." Jacob said to himself.

Whilst he gazed down at the alley, he kept getting mental images of that moment back in the shower. He tried to shake them off, but being the man he was it was proving difficult. He needed something to distract him. Something to take his mind off of her being nude and covered in moisture. Oh god this was harder than he thought. Something. _Anything._

"Hey Jacob?" Shay'est's voice sounded from down the hall "Could you get me a towel? There aren't any in here."

Oh god, not helping.

"Sure. One sec, something's going on over here." He said, gazing down at the alley, where now a small red armoured grunt had appeared at the alley he saved Shay'est from.

The grunt looked around and observed the puddle of blood that Shay'est had left. It was starting to be washed away by the rain but

it was still there. The grunt was accompanied by two brutes. They weren't low ranking either. They scanned the area with their eyes, and then seemed to be shouting at the grunt. The grunt began to panic and looked around stressfully. Whilst he was looking the other way one of the chieftains pulled out a Mauler compact shotgun from his belt, and aimed at the back of the confused grunt's weak armour.

A loud Crack ripped through the moist air, causing Jacob to jump. The grunt flopped to the floor as bright blue blood sprayed from its back. The brutes trudged off toward the direction they came from, leaving the grunt's corpse there. The grunt must have been leading them to something; probably Shay'est, and when he couldn't find her, they blew him away for wasting their time.

"Well, that was a pretty good boner killer." Jacob muttered to himself as he turned away to fetch a towel. The thoughts he had about her in the shower had started to fade, due to that alien show.

After he grabbed a towel from the adjacent room for Shay'est, he returned to her and this time made sure to knock on the door. She opened it a crack and peeked through. Her face was still visibly purple.

"Here you are. Sorry again about earlier." He said, scratching his head with his other hand.

She took the towel but left the door open still. Only a crack however, so he couldn't see through.

Jacob decided now was an alright time to mess with her. "If it's any consolation," he said through the gap between the door and doorframe "I think your freckles are cute."

She let out an eeep! and slammed the door. Jacob walked off laughing to himself. His statement may have been true, but her reaction was priceless. Just the kind of mood raiser he needed.

He made his way back to his makeshift campsite, where he began to extinguish the napalm camp fire he had made. Each ODS's survival kit came with napalm throwers and fire extinguishers, among other things. After extinguishing the fire, he put the elite's weapons together neatly for her to pick up. She had a carbine rifle and a plasma rifle. Both decent weapons which were more than capable of causing a lot of pain.

The burn on Jacob's shoulder was in fact caused by a plasma rifle from an elite he had encountered earlier. He hadn't checked on his wound in a while and decided that now was as good a time as any. He unclipped his shoulder plate and examined his wound. The burn cream had worked wonders, even healing his flesh. It was still visibly scarred but looked much better. The air chilled his flesh, sending a chill down his spine.

"What's that?" A voice came from behind him.

He turned around to see Shay'est walking toward him, her gaze fixated on his shoulder wound. She was finishing clipping on her breast plate, and had her helmet under her left arm. The rest of her armour was already on, and it looked like she'd given it a good clean, probably with the damp towel she used to clean the water from her

moist body with.

Not again.

He shook the thought and stayed focused. "It's just a wound from a plasma rifle. Nothing too bad, I'll live." He said, about to clip it back down.

"No, let me see." She grabbed the shoulder plate, preventing it from lowering.

Jacob sighed, but indulged her. He let the shoulder plate dangle down whilst she inspected his wound. She looked concerned at first, but then smiled. "Well, it looks like you'll be fine after all. What did this to you?" She asked.

"An elite male, like yourself." He chose his next words carefully, attempting not to cause too much anger "He stepped on my chest whilst I was lying and still dazed from the shockwave, aimed his gun at my head, but I snapped to it just before he pulled the trigger, shoved his gun out of my way, unfortunately causing it to discharge a shot into my shoulder, and punched his knee, fracturing it and causing him to step off of me. My shoulder plate had been knocked free from the blast. I've fixed that since."

Shay'est swallowed hard. She was concerned for her ally, but at the same time her curiosity of the situation got the better of her. She wanted to know the details behind every story and not miss a thing. She had been like that since she was a child. "And then what happened?" She shakily asked.

Jacob didn't want to scare her, but needed to get a message across at this point. He looked into her eyes and said "I put a bullet in his head."

Shay'est flinched and looked away as Jacob clipped his shoulder plate back on. That should have gotten the message across not to double cross him. Jacob was a good ally to have, and he was definitely not someone to be fucked with.

11. Chapter 11

11.

**Location: New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.

>Timestamp: October 21**st**** 2552. 1:40 hours.**

>Unit ID: Corporal Jacob Matthews (Male, 26, 5'11"), Orbital Drop Shock Trooper, 7**th**** Shock Troopers Battalion.

>Status: Functioning.

Once the pair was set, they made their way down to the street, stopping at each corner on the way down to ensure the way was clear. They had planned a route away from the Jiralhanae routes that had been set earlier. Shay'est remembered all of the routes explained in her briefing, just in case the situation should arise wherein she would need help from the nearest one at the time. She found it strange that certain details can be used differently in each

scenario.

Once they got to the damp street, they looked around to see the rain was starting to slow down to a sprinkle. They began to walk down the street, keeping on their toes while searching for signs of enemies. Jacob had decided not to tell Shay'est about the grunt he saw being executed earlier. He may have been close to her or someone she looked up to. His efforts were however for naught.

Shay'est caught a glimpse of a grunt's foot; one with red armour on its shin. Jacob noticed Shay'est's eyes light up and a small smile stretch across her face. He sighed as he realized she believed the grunt was alive.

"Maj-" Jacob gripped her shoulder before she could continue. She looked at him and he shook his head. It almost pained him to see the smile slowly fade from her face as a frown just as slowly replaced it.

"I'm sorry. I didn't want to tell you earlier. I'd hoped you wouldn't know him." Jacob said as he kept his hand on her shoulder. He didn't want to make her spirits drop any further, or she may be distracted in battle. It had happened to him before, and it doesn't turn out well.

"I understand. It's alright, let's keep moving. I want to kill some Jiralhanae." She said, seriousness now shrouding her sadness.

"Oohrah." Jacob replied.

"What's that?" Shay'est asked with another curious head tilt.

"What?"

"_That_. That 'Oohrah' stuff? What's that about?" She giggled. "You sound like a fool when you speak it."

Jacob laughed. He had forgotten she didn't know about his military's customs, nor did he know much of hers. "It's sort of a battle cry that the UNSC Marine Corps use. It's like a way of showing that you agree with someone else's statement. Say, if someone says 'Let's go kill some enemies, and afterwards go get a drink!' and you also want to, you say 'Oohrah'." He explained.

Shay'est slowly nodded in understanding. "Alright. I'll try and remember that." She said with a smile.

They continued down the street on the safe route planned out to get to Techie's hiding place. Martin was smart. He knew how to hide properly. He was hidden amongst the trash cans and a dumpster, along with some other corpses that had been swept aside by brute patrols.

A voice came through the helmet. It was Martin. "Hey Shadow, you there?"

"Yeah mate, what's up?" He asked, worried his ally had been discovered.

"Um, well how much longer are you gonna be?" He shakily asked.

"Not long. Five minutes. Why?" He was growing more and more concerned by the moment.

"Well, these bodies are starting to stink real badâ€¦ That mixed with the trashâ€¦"

"Oh, you wuss. We'll be there in like 5 minutes." He laughed back.

"Alright, see you soon, Shadow."

A moment of silence passed as he switched off the microphone. Shay'est decided to break the silence with a giggle.

"Shadow? Really?" She laughed.

"Hey, I didn't pick it, my squad decided for me. That's what we decided to do. We picked _each other's _call signs." He defended his dignity.

"Alright then, if you say soâ€¦ It's just soâ€¦" She chuckled.

"Cheesy, I know. Let's just get past it." He said, unenthusiastically.

She had a last laugh before nodding and they continued on their path. "What were your other friends' call signs?" She asked, not slowing down. She knew Jacob wanted to get to his friend soon.

"I'll tell you as we find them. If we find they're dead, I'll tell you then."

They kept moving. If they wasted time talking, Techie could end up dead and then they would have nobody to help them out.

Jacob didn't tell Shay'est that the grunt had probably betrayed her. He wanted her to keep believing the brutes killed him in cold blood. If it made her mad and want to kill them, she could use that anger to her advantage. She could harness her urge to kill them and use it against them in combat.

Jacob kept quiet until they reached the alleyway where Techie's beacon was sending from. Jacob and Shay'est stopped at the corner of the alleyway and Jacob quickly peeked around the corner to assess his target. It was dark and smelled quite bad. There were corpses piled against the side of the alleyway. There was also a brute at the other end of the alleyway facing away from them. He was unsure if this brute was alone or not.

Jacob turned back to Shay'est and whispered "This is it. He should be in here. There is a brute at the opposite end of the alleyway. We can try and sneak up to where Techie is hidden, by the trash cans, but how we will get him out of there without the thing realizing is beyond me."

Shay'est took a moment to think, she had her carbine rifle at the

ready. "We'll work that out when we get to it."

Jacob turned back around, muttering "God, you sound like Courtney."

"What?" she nudged him with the end of her rifle.

"Nothing. Let's go."

The pair stepped carefully into the alley. They slowly made their way over to the trash cans and corpses. No wonder Techie wanted to get out of here. It _reeked._ And he was _under _all this crap?

"Techie," Jacob whispered into the mic "We're here. Try to get out of your hiding place, but do so as quietly as you can. We need that brute to stay blissfully unaware."

"Gotcha dude. Give me a sec."

A figure began to slowly rise from the side of Jacob's vision, beside the dumpster. He was in ODS armor like Jacob's, only his had a purple strip down the center of the helmet, where Jacob had a black strip. He was as careful as he could be, not knocking anything or making a single sound.

Ting.

A noise came from behind Jacob. It was silent, but in that scenario where everything was, it may as well have been a gunshot. The brute flinched and slowly began to turn around.

Oh for fuck's sakeâ€¦| You've gotta be kidding me.

12. Chapter 12

12.

**Location: New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.

>Timestamp: October 21**** 2552. 1:45 hours.**

>Unit ID: Corporal Jacob Matthews (Male, 26, 5'11"), Orbital Drop Shock Trooper, 7**** Shock Troopers Battalion.

>Status: Functioning.

Jacob spun around to see where the noise that just ruined his day came from. Shay'est had accidentally tapped the dumpster with the barrel of her carbine rifle as she moved past it. Jacob dropped his shoulders and rolled his head back.

"Fuck my lifeâ€¦|"

The brute began to shift its weight, about to turn around. Jacob broke into a sprint at the beast. The brute stood a good 6'4" and did not look weak. They are fairly built creatures, strongly similar to gorillas, but mixed with bulldogs. They were not to be fucked with. They are easily enraged, and when they are, they will tear steel apart with their bare hands.

Jacob pulled out his knife with his right hand a good metre away, before leaping into the air, preparing to thrust his blade into the brute's head before it made any noise. Unfortunately for him, this brute was on the ball, and spun around just in time to catch Jacob's arm, shift its weight and slam him into the ground, sending his knife skidding off into the open street.

Luckily for Jacob, this brute was on its own. Unluckily for Jacob, this brute was a quick bastard. Faster than most brutes he had gone up against. When Jacob hit the floor he was winded. The air escaped from his lungs, and he struggled to get it back. He did however instinctively reach for his pistol, which was still firmly attached to his thigh.

With a sharp inhale, he pulled the pistol from his belt and aimed at the brute. He exhaled and fired two shots at it, one landed in its right shoulder, the next was aimed at the head, but since Jacob was thrown off by his inability to breathe properly and the fact that the first shot shifted the brute's weight, it landed in the brute's left shoulder.

From out of the alleyway Techie launched himself; a human rocket, into the mid to lower back of the brute. His tackle threw the brute off balance, causing one of its legs to rise up into the air in an attempt to keep its balance with the marine's mass hanging off of it precariously, Techie's arms wrapped around its waist.

What looked like a green strip blazed past the group, passing cleanly through the brute's head; through one temple and out the other. The brute's eyes rolled back as some of the contents of its head, along with some small shards of skull were sucked out of the exit path of the shot. Covenant carbine rifles were very deadly weapons when used precisely and put in the hands of an accurate soldier.

The brute fell to the ground and hit the tarmac at the edge of the road, beside the footpath with an earth-shattering thump, sending droplets of water, and Techie, flying a good 30cm. Jacob slowly sat up, still catching his breath and pushed his hands back against the road, resting his weight on his arms. Now sitting up, he looked towards Martin and nodded with a quick and out of breath "Thanks bud."

"No problem." Techie said, also sitting up. "Let's not do it again anytime soon though." He groaned as he shifted his weight forward, lifting himself back up to his feet. Techie was 26, like Jacob. He was of North American descent, like Jacob and also couldn't hold his drinks. Like Jacob. The two sort of saw each other as brothers.

"Haha, you're telling me." Jacob put a hand on his knee, attempting to stand back up. He was regaining his breath and was now looking around for his knife. He had a feeling he would need it again in the future.

"Hey, you guys alright?" Shay'est asked, her carbine held, the muzzle facing upright in her right hand, and her left hand resting on her hip. "You seemed to struggle with him a bit."

There was a silence as the boys looked at each other in amazement.

There were no words to be said, they just looked at each other and knew immediately what each other was thinking. _Fuck you._

Techie stood up with Shay'est's help and began to dust himself off whilst Jacob remained crouched and looking down, searching for his precious knife. Techie and Shay'est both watched him, shaking their heads slowly.

"Leave it. We should make haste to cover, and away from the brute. His friends may be by soon. This area isn't safe." Shay'est said, however she was rather enjoying the sight of Jacob scurrying about. She was used to seeing him collected and knowing what he was doing. This was entertaining.

"No. It's not that simple, I can't just leave this behind, it's not mine!" he replied, distress in his voice.

"Oh? Whose is it then?" She asked.

"It's his cousin's." Techie answered. "It's very special to him. It's the last gift his cousin ever gave him before leaving for Reach."

Techie leant down and grabbed the foot of the brute they had worked together to kill. He began to drag it into the alley they emerged from, hiding it from any passers-by to possibly by them more time, should they need it.

"Aha!" Jacob yelled excitedly "Found you!" he stood up, holding his knife above his head. "Almost lost you there, cuz." He said as he firmly tucked his cherished weapon back into its sheath. "Alright, let's get back to the hotel. I could use a rest. And I'm damn sure Techie could use a shower to get rid of that rank-o stench." He said, waving his hand in front of his face to ward off the stink as he walked past Martin.

A few minutes later, the group made their way safely and stealthily back to the hotel Numbuoy. They trudged up the steps as the sound of their footsteps echoed through the empty building, bouncing off the walls and returning to their eardrums.

Once the group had sit themselves down to relax, Techie finally spoke up. "Well?" He said "Care to explain her?" he said, pointing his thumb at Shay'est.

"Oh, right." Jacob said "Where are my manners. Techie, allow me to introduce you to Crazy Bitch."

13. Chapter 13

13.

**Location: Numbuoy Apartments, Level 1, New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.

>Timestamp: October 21**st**** 2552. 01:55 hours.**

>Unit ID: Shay'est (Female, 6'1") Sangheili, Minor Domo.
Status: Functioning, wound still healing.**

Now back at the campsite that Jacob had fashioned earlier, the group took a few moments to relax. They were growing tired and would need to rest soon. The ODST marines had been trained to go days without rest, but being that they got plenty before they came on this mission with regular sleeping patterns, it was difficult for them to stay awake.

Techie was still quite defensive around Shay'est. He didn't trust her completely and she could tell he had doubts that he ever would fully trust her. She wanted to know why he had so much hostility towards her. She helped him, so why did he hate her? Jacob helped her, and she didn't hate him for it.

"So," she finally mustered the courage to ask "Why the hostility toward me?"

Techie scoffed "What, apart from the fact that we're at war against each other and you've invaded my home planet?" he said as he glared at her.

"Yeahâ€¦| Apart from that."

Techie glanced over at Jacob, who frowned back at him. Techie then turned back to her and sighed, his eyes closed. "My father was serving on Reach as security when it was attacked by you guys. He didn't make it off." He didn't look at her as he said it, and instead looked away when his eyes opened.

There was a moment of silence. Jacob awkwardly coughed and went to get his napalm thrower from his survival kit. They might as well be warm while they discussed this.

"I'm sorryâ€¦|" Shay'est said, averting her gaze from him and bowing her head. She had no idea that she would ever meet someone who was caught up in the effects of the glassing and invasion of Reach.

"It's alright; I can't exactly blame you, can I? You're just some Elite; just a pawn in their game of chess. You can't be held accountable for their actions." He ranted on, looking over at Jacob; ready to watch the flames spew out onto the charred rubble he had assembled prior to their meeting.

There was another awkward silence as the few of them watched the napalm thrower spray liquid fire into the campfire with a psssshhh sound. They could feel the heat emanating from it as it sprayed and Shay'est felt the warmth in her eyes, but there was something so tantalizing about it that prevented her from turning away. Her eyes began to water as the heat dried them up, so she blinked and finally averted her gaze.

Jacob but the napalm thrower down and turned toward the rooms. "Well, I'm exhausted. I'm going to bed. Techie, can you fix up my helmet to be like yours?"

"Yeah sure," He replied raising his right arm "Chuck us it 'ere."

Jacob took off his helmet and tossed it over to Martin. He then continued walking down the hall. He pointed to the room in which

Shay'est had her shower. "There's a shower in here that seems to work by the way. You can try and get some of that stank off of you if you want."

"Alright, cheers mate!" Techie replied, not looking up from the helmet.

Shay'est watched for a while as he worked on the helmet's electronics before wondering if her staying up whilst the other two were asleep was a good idea. They might not trust her enough to allow her to do that, so she decided to head to a room also. She stood up and tapped Martin on the head as she walked past toward the rooms.
"Night."

"Oh. Night." He replied, this time looking up from the helmet for a moment, then returning to his tinkering inside of it.

"Be sure not to break his shit," she said with a giggle "I am sure he will not thank you for that."

"Hehâ€|" Techie chuckled. "You're tellin' meâ€|"

She got to a point in the hallway between the first and second rooms, at which point she froze. Which room did Jacob go into? If she went into the same room as him on accident, would he believe her if she tried to explain it really _was _an accident? He wouldn't get upset would he? She looked back and forth between the two doors and eventually decided to take a chance and walk into the second room.

She opened the door, and peered inside, however she couldn't see a thing. It was dark in there, and when she looked at the fire earlier it left a mark in her vision. She couldn't tell if he was in there or not. She didn't want to ask, because if he was, he was awfully quiet and probably hadn't noticed her. She was afraid that should she speak, she might wake him up, or he may think she was trying to catch a glimpse of him changing or something.

She blushed at the thought and hoped that he wasn't in this room. She tip-toed her way to the bed and felt the quilt as quietly as she could, searching for fold marks that might indicate that Jacob was in the bed. She prayed diligently that her eyes adjusted to the darkness so she could be sure, as it was a big bed, and she couldn't feel anything, but that didn't necessarily mean he wasn't in there.

She decided to try and whisper to see if he was in the bed. She wanted to be sure. "Heyâ€| Hey Jacob, you here?" she whispered very gently. She only heard silence, so she assumed he wasn't there. She slowly removed her armour and got ready for bed.

She crept into bed and slid under the covers, lying on her left side so she didn't disrupt her stitches; Jacob would hate to have to stitch her up again. She didn't really feel like pissing him off and having to see his angry side. The story she heard about him against that other Sangheili was enough. She rested her head on the pillow and closed her eyes. She had passed out earlier, but her body hadn't exactly rested. Her body was more tired than she thought, quickly drifting into a deep sleep.

14. Chapter 14

14.

****Location:** Numbuoy Apartments, Level 1, New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.

>Timestamp: October 21****st****** 2552. 14:21 hours.**

>Unit ID: Corporal Jacob Matthews (Male, 26, 5'11"), Orbital Drop Shock Trooper, 7****th****** Shock Troopers Battalion.

>Status: Functioning.

Jacob rolled over and stretched out his left arm. He had taken his armour off before he went to bed, so he did so with ease, and felt his hand slap on something that shouldn't have been there. He thought maybe Martin had left his helmet there beside him after tinkering with it. He decided to inspect his helmet, seeing if there was any major damage done from Techie's modifications.

His hand slid over the top of the smooth and strangely warm helmet before reaching a small bulb. This bulb was ever so slightly rougher than the rest of the helmet, so he thought this was some small gadget that Techie must have installed. He continued feeling down to where his visor should have been. He could not find his visor, and to his surprise, instead found another smooth helmet-like object.

A jolt shot through his body as he realized; this was not his helmet, and that he should move his hand away. Now. Jacob slowly removed his hand from Shay'est's warm bosom and carefully raised his head to be level with hers. He was mortified to find that her eyes had opened, and she had been awoken by the slap. She lay there with her right arm by her side and her left arm under the pillow her head was resting on, facing him.

Jacob looked at her, with his mouth opened wide. When the fuck did she get there? She wasn't there when he went to bed! Surely not! He'd have realized wouldn't he? There's no way, unless she arrived later. There was a long silence, during which the pair simply stared at each other, speechless.

Finally, Shay'est shuddered and gently whispered "I'm sorry. I thoughtâ€|" Her voice wavered "I thought you weren't in here, and I couldn't see when I came in. I tried calling you, but you must have been asleepâ€|" She found her eyes gazing into his without realizing as she spoke. Shay'est pulled the covers up over her chest and her face lit up a familiar shade of purple.

Shay'est's eyes were a beautiful midnight blue colour. Jacob always liked this colour, and it was the colour he had originally picked to be his armour trim colour, before he picked black. His face was burning from the blood rushing to it. Jacob eventually got his mind together and decided it would be best if he put on his armour and got out of there, before things got more awkward.

Jacob rolled over and sat up, but just before he got out of bed, something caught his eye; something sitting on the bedside table; something head shaped. His helmet. If his helmet was here now and wasn't when he went to bed, thenâ€|

"Oh sweet fuck" Jacob said to himself, horrified.

"What? What's wrong now?"

"Martin" He brought my helmet to me last night when he was done tinkering with it" During the night" Whilst I was asleep" And probably whilst you were here too" He stammered.

"So? What's so wrong about" the Sangheili trailed off as she began to realize what her comrade was getting at and put two and two together in her head. "Oh" So if he saw us in bed together, then he probably thinks-

"Yeah," Jacob cut her off as he stood up; wearing only his military underwear "He probably thinks _that_."

Shay'est buried her face into her pillow in embarrassment and began to scream into it. The pillow muffled the sound and it could only be heard within the room, so it wouldn't send Martin running to view a repeat of what he probably saw the night before.

After finally pulling herself together, Shay'est lifted her head and glanced back over at Jacob, hoping that he would have some idea of what they should do, and asked how they should go about explaining it. Jacob was slipping into his armour at the time.

Jacob simply replied with "It's quite simple, really. We tell the truth." He said with a grin. "If he doesn't believe it, then that's just tough luck. We told the truth, and that's all there is to it." Jacob finished as he slipped his arms through his sleeves and began to attach his padding.

He could feel her watching him change, and it made him slightly nervous. As he finished putting on his armour he began to make his way toward the door. "Well, I'm off to work honey." He chuckled "See you when I get home!" He said as he walked through.

"_What?_"

He closed the door behind him and began to make his way back to the campsite. He was surprised to find Martin already up and getting ready, waiting for the others to emerge from their room. Techie had blond hair and blue eyes. He stood 6 foot tall, and had a slender build. Martin looked up at Jacob and his face lit up with a cheeky grin.

"_You bastard, I know where you're about to go_"

"So" He said, trying to withhold a laugh "How was she?"

Jacob flipped him the bird and said "No. Don't go there. We aren't going to talk about that. It was a misunderstanding. That's all."

There was an awkward silence as they sat around the smouldering remains of the campfire.

"So um" Martin murmured secretively "Should we share this with Courtney or?"

Jacob hesitated. It was only a few months ago that he and the Gunnery Sergeant had started seeing each other. After her break up with David, he was her fall back plan. He didn't consider them to be in a serious relationship, but instead something casual. However, he couldn't say he knew how Courtney felt. "No." He replied sternly "There's no need to. Nothing happened, so there's nothing to share."

Jacob didn't really feel like getting into a fight with Courtney. He had been in one with her beforehand, and he didn't fancy it again. Last time resulted in a week without sex, and that was simply because he talked to another female soldier. He couldn't even begin to fathom what cruel punishment she would have in store for him after hearing of this.

15. Chapter 15

15.

****Location: New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.**
>Timestamp: August 14** 2552. 12:03 hours.****

>Unit ID: Corporal Jacob Matthews (Male, 25, 5'11"), Orbital Drop Shock Trooper, 7** Shock Troopers Battalion.**

>Status: Functioning, on leave before evac mission.

It was warm. The weather was surprisingly pleasant as Jacob waltzed through the shopping centre, picking up groceries to take back home to his apartment. He had just began his 3 month leave period, during which he wanted to have a nice relax, hang out with friends, maybe find a good girl, take her home, have some fun, hopefully never see her again. A typical marine's holiday.

As he walked past the restaurant on his right, someone caught his eye. Someone he knew. A woman. Gunnery Sergeant Courtney Smith. Normally this wouldn't strike him as odd, seeing as how they lived in the same area, but something was different about her. Something was very wrong. She was crying.

Courtney was a strong woman. Jacob had only ever seen her cry twice; once when she got news that her very close auntie had been killed in the glassing on reach, and once during recruit training when she dislocated her knee. Now he had witnessed it a third time, and this time she was alone, in a restaurant, with a half empty bottle of wine, drinking away.

Of course, she was part of his squad. He couldn't leave her in this state. He had seen her, and if her being in this state ended up with her doing something terrible to herself, and him knowing he could have prevented it, the mere thought of it tore him up inside. Jacob decided to go and see what was wrong. Maybe he could do something to help. He walked in and sat down in front of her, placing his hands on hers and looking her in the eyes. He then gestured for a waiter to bring another glass for him, hopefully this way he could take some of the hit to her liver away.

It was then that Courtney explained that she and David had broken up. David wanted to go faster than she did, and she wasn't ready to

follow him on it, so they ended it. She was in the restaurant drinking away her sorrows. As much as Courtney tried to hold back her sadness, it would do her no good. A tear rolled down her cheek. She tried to quickly wipe it away, but Jacob beat her to it. His hand reached up, and brushed it off her cheek.

After a few drinks and some comforting words, they eventually finished the rest of the bottle together. Courtney was about to suggest another one, but seeing as she was struggling to form proper sentences, Jacob decided she'd had enough. He took her hand in his and called for the check. "Come on," he said, looking into her eyes "let's go home. I think we've had a bit much."

She gave him a look, thinking that he was poking fun at her initially, but after a few moments she realized he was being sincere, and agreed with him. They went back to Jacob's place (because it was the closest) to calm themselves down. This didn't happen. They went and had sex.

From then until the rupture they had been together. They weren't in a serious relationship, just something casual for fun, and to take their minds off of other things. They saw each other once a week to 'ease tension' and 'spend time together'. After their weekly root, they would maybe watch a movie or do something else together. Sometimes they'd even just have sex again if they didn't feel like doing anything else.

Jacob wasn't sure he wanted to take things further with her or not. He liked her, but he didn't like her. He wasn't in love with her, and he didn't see the point in starting a real relationship with someone he wasn't in love with. He knew that relationships that involve the two people not being in love ended badly, and he didn't want to go through that needless pain.

Jacob had been with girls before Courtney, and again nothing serious. Just casual sex partners here and there with the occasional one night stand. There seems to be something about a man in uniform that the ladies will crawl for. Jacob liked how easy it made the girls around him. Nights at the pub seemed to go over so much smoother when in uniform.

Things were going well, until eventually Courtney became jealous of him being around other girls. Soon, she was in on his social life, learning all the cliques and loops, memorizing details of every girl he met. This was not good. She wanted control of him all to herself. Jacob didn't want a relationship with her. Not a real one.

One day it got to the point where Jacob ended up having an argument with Courtney over a girl he was talking to. Courtney thought the girl was getting too close, so she confronted the girl and then confronted Jacob, calling him a traitor and a hopeless boyfriend. He told her that he never saw them as 'seeing each other' and they fell apart for a while.

This only lasted a few days, as this soon afterwards, they met each other at a pub that
>Jacob regularly went to, got drunk, and did the usual. They were not the closest of pairs, but they managed.<p>

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>Sorry that this chapter was a little short, I have a LOT of work to do. Do not fret, as the next one is a bit longer to make up for it.
>:)<p>

16. Chapter 16

16.

**Location: Numbuoy Apartments, Level 1, New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.

>Timestamp: October 21**st**** 2552. 14:30 hours.**

>Unit ID: Shay'est (Female, 6'1") Sangheili, Minor Domo.
Status: Functioning, wound still healing.**

Shay'est sat up in bed and looked around the room. It looked different to how she thought it was last night. She thought this room was identical to the one she had her shower in, but it looked completely different. The shape was different, the placement of the furniture was different; She was surprised she hadn't tripped over something thinking it was somewhere else last night.

She slumped back down into the cosy bed, still warm from where she had been sleeping there the night before. She pulled up her knees and curled up into her warm patch, nuzzling her head into her pillow. This comfortable position didn't last long however, as she suddenly felt the need to stretch.

The Sangheili slowly pushed her arms and legs outward, and lifted her head back, stretching her entire body out with a light moan. She was careful however not to disrupt her stitching. Her arms stretched forward across the bed, her hands placing themselves on the warm patch where Jacob was sleeping earlier. She looked at the small folds and scrunched up spots left by where her human ally had been sleeping earlier. Her eyes drifted up to where his head had left an indent in the pillow he was using.

Shay'est smiled and brought her hand up to fit in the indent in the pillow. The male's scent was still lingering in the bed, and it somehow brought a calming feeling to her. The male Sangheili were not as evasive as he was around her. They would take any chance they got, but something about Jacob playing hard to get drew her to the game.

On Sanghelios, male Sangheili would write unique "Battle Poems" for their families, detailing the deeds and actions of its members during times of war. The males were not the most romantic of individuals, the "Battle Poem" being their most romantic creation, and were sometimes rather vulgar, their huge egos getting the better of them. Many Sangheili females were attracted to males who could boast the most, but Shay'est was not. She wanted a modest male. One who was not guaranteed to cheat on her, as many Sangheili males often did.

Sangheili swordsmen are some of the most respected males within Sangheili culture. Sangheili law dictates that swordsmen were allowed to copulate with as many women as they should desire. Shay'est despised this fact. She thought it was terrible to be with someone,

someone you should really have feelings for before doing anything like copulating, and then leaving them for another female.

Shay'est gripped the pillow Jacob had slept on and pulled the pillow toward her, drawing his scent closer to her face. She had been taught that a human's scent was revolting compared to that of a Sangheili male. She could tell no difference, if not it was somewhat sweeter. She took a deep breath of the sweet air and sighed. A familiar thought popped into her head.

Why was he so nice to her?

Shay'est was a Sangheili, the enemy the humans had been fighting for so long. Why was he being so kind as to save her and even heal her wound? She began to get the feeling she would never shake these thoughts unless she actually asked him. She decided she would do that today. Get up, and before they do anything, ask why he helped her.

She decided now was as good a time as any to get out of bed. If she overslept she would grow tired during the day. Shay'est slid her hand off the pillow and used it to lift her body away from the bed. She slid her left leg out of the bed, and the rest of her body sheepishly followed. Shay'est enjoyed sleep and showers. Sleep she enjoyed perhaps a little too much.

She suddenly recalled what the dream she had the night before was about. It had probably inspired her to ask Jacob why he helped her, but not in the way she had intended. In her dream, Jacob patched her up and they smiled at each other. They then found themselves sitting next to the campfire Jacob had made and talking.

The talking wasn't a problem for Shay'est, in fact she'd come to rather enjoy her conversations with her ally. It was what the talking led to that was a problem for her. They soon found themselves coiled with one another, lying against the cool floor that she remembered from her stitching procedure, and doing unspeakable things.

Shay'est felt one of her two hearts nearly leap out of her chest as she remembered. She froze. She blushed. She winced. She shuddered. Sheâ€¦ Liked it? In her dream she was happy. If this happened to her in the waking world, she would certainly not be as understanding and joyfulâ€¦ Would she?

She tried to shake the thought of their fantasy world eloping and thought of it as nothing more than that. A fantasy. Her brain acting in strange ways. She would have to punish it with some sort of alcoholic beverage later. Her two hearts were both throbbing uncontrollably, despite her best efforts to shake the thoughts. Each time she shook them, they returned, just as or if not more vivid than the last time. She felt her face burn with blush.

She put on her armour and walked out into the hall, trying her best to contain her thoughts. She was doing well, tooâ€¦ Until she saw him. Jacob was sitting next to the now extinguished campfire with Martin. They were talking about something serious, the expressions on their faces not indicating any kind of joy.

Martin noticed her appearance, and nodded toward her, indicating that

he had noticed her arrival and signalling to Jacob that she had. Jacob turned to her and smiled. Shay'est felt her face explode with warmth as she noticed him sitting the exact spot where, in her unconscious fantasy, they had mated. She shakily walked over and sat gently next to him, trying to indicate that nothing was wrong.

"Something up?"

Shay'est quickly turned to Jacob, startled. He noticed she was acting strangely, despite her best efforts to hide her thoughts. Her brain scrambled, trying to think of something to say, but the longer she looked at him, the more she could think of that one thing and one thing only that invaded the space in her mind.

She finally brought herself to look away and muttered "No, I am fine. Thank you for the concern though." She said, clutching her left knee and bringing it up to her chest.

"Alright," Jacob replied, cocking an eyebrow as he did "If you insist. We just got a signal through the helmets that someone else from our squad is still kicking. We're going to go see who it is. You want to come along?"

Jacob clearly noticed something was on her mind, and was unsure if she was fit for battle. He was concerned about her. Cute.

"Yes I would. I would rather enjoy any chance I can get a shot at those Jiralhanae." She said with a grin.

"Oohrah." Jacob replied with a chuckle.

Shay'est decided that today might not be the best time to ask why he helped her. At least until the thoughts about the night before were completely erased from her mind.

17. Chapter 17

17.

****Location: Numbuoy Apartments, Level 1, New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.**

>Timestamp: October 21** 2552. 14:45 hours.****

**>Unit ID: Shay'est (Female, 6'1") Sangheili, Minor Domo.
Status: Functioning, wound still healing.****

After about 10 or so minutes of preparing, the group was ready to head off toward the beacon. They made their way toward the stairs and got ready to stealthily make their way through the city, attempting to avoid patrols and other enemies who just so happen to pass by.

A few minutes in to the journey, Techie asked Shay'est a question. "Hey, Crazy Bitch,"

"Yes? What is wrong?"

"I was just wondering, how do you know how to speak English? And you speak it pretty well too." He finished, not looking at her at any

point during his question, and remaining focused on the terrain around him, looking for snipers.

"Well," She slowly replied, also remaining aware of her surroundings "We are taught at a young age. All children are raised by our uncles or aunts and we rarely get to see our parents, for the most part. There are a lucky few who do, but I was not one of themâ€|" Shay'est realized she was going on a tangent from answering her question. "Anyway, what I'm getting at is my uncle taught me how to speak it. Your language is not too difficult to learn, thankfully. Your concepts of society are vastly different in some ways, but the language I can get used to."

There was a hesitant pause before eventually Techie replied "Interestingâ€|"

Nothing much else was shared in the way of communication until they heard something come from the open park area ahead of where they were. The sound started off as sharp cracking, like the sound of rocks being dropped or thrown at the ground. This was the sound of bullets penetrating concrete walls.

As the group drew closer to the blip on the map, shown by their helmets' heads-up-display, they heard more and more noises. Sounds of gunfire and screaming. The screaming was not in pain. The screaming was brutes yelling orders to grunts in a panic. There was also a human's voice, yelling profanities and taunts amongst the mixture of swirling voices humming through the air.

Gunnery Sergeant Courtney was holed up in a rubble-filled park that a building had collapsed on. She was the one the signal was coming from. Courtney had activated her beacon and held off her position until help arrived. She had a good sense of what her squad was capable of, so she knew one would come to rescue her eventually.

The group made their way down into the park and toward the collapsed office building that was infested with multiple enemies, along with the Gunnery Sergeant. Shay'est could tell by the sound of her gun that she was using an assault rifle. This was the same kind of rifle that the lone marine had wounded her with earlier.

The group didn't call out her name, and wouldn't do so until they drew nearer to her. If they called for her, the enemies would turn their attention to the group. They could handle it, but Courtney seemed to be doing a fine job of laying down suppressive fire as it was. Jacob readied his SMG, and so did Martin. Shay'est took out her plasma rifle, as using a carbine in such close quarters combat against so many enemies would be a bad idea.

The team moved slowly through the remains of the building, which was lying on its side. The floor was covered in glass, and most of the desks were also on the floor. There were still some desks hanging from what were now the walls, and was previously the floor of the building. There was an elevator shaft to the group's right, which they used as a hallway to progress through the building.

They used the brutes' panic to their advantage, calmly passing through every floor, killing off the confused aliens with ease. The trio eventually reached Courtney's hold off point, which was the reception desk in the lobby.

"Hey Gunny!" Techie cried out "It's Shadow and Techie! We're coming through, we've killed most of them off on this side! Don't kill us!"

There was a hesitation, followed by more gunfire, but it was in the opposite direction "No promises!" They heard a woman yell back.

"There's also someone else with us you can't kill, okay?" Jacob screamed out "She's an elite, but she's friendly, don't kill her!"

Shay'est had almost forgotten that the marines would still kill her on sight. She had grown used to the company of Jacob and Martin, and got the idea in the back of her head that humans were friendlies. That could have been a foolish mistake to make, as she was about to step out into the Gunnery Sergeant's line of fire.

"Again, no promises! Tell it not to get in my way!" They heard back.

Jacob nodded toward Martin and signalled toward Shay'est for them to move in to Courtney's position. They ran out into the open, running across the lobby toward the desk. As they ran, they pinned suppressive fire at the enemies who were at what was the doorway to the building. Shay'est even killed a brute, a plasma shot striking it dead in the face.

Jacob slid behind the desk on one leg, and the other two ran in low behind him. They took cover beside Courtney and aided her in holding off her point. There were only a few left by the time they got there, so it wasn't that much of a problem. A click came from Courtney's rifle, signifying that it was out of ammunition.

Jacob didn't hesitate to hand her his SMG, as he pulled out his pistol. He preferred precision to rapid fire anyway.

After a good 10 minutes of holding them off, the enemy numbers eventually began to dwindle. The group took this chance to make their way back to where they came from, and hope to lose them through there. This plan was pulled off flawlessly as they sprinted back towards the door they came in from, still laying suppressive fire at the enemies, so that they didn't progress along with them.

They sprinted as fast as they could toward the other end of the building, passing by the corpses of brutes and grunts they had left behind. After about 30 seconds of running, they were free, but continued to make their way back to Jacob's hideout, as far as they could get from the fire fight they were just in. It would have attracted a decent amount of attention and would probably blow their cover.

18. Chapter 18

18.

**Location: Numbuoy Apartments, Level 1, New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.

>Timestamp: October 21**st**** 2552. 15:20 hours.**

>Unit ID: Corporal Jacob Matthews (Male, 25, 5'11"), Orbital Drop Shock Trooper, 7**** Shock Troopers Battalion.

>Status: Functioning, trying to catch his breath.

The group had finally made it back, running the whole way to the apartment building. They had gathered around the charcoaled campfire remains Jacob had made, hands on their knees and desperately gasping for air. They looked at each other while doing so. Jacob had closed his left eye, as a bead of sweat had trickled down from his forehead and threatened to enter it.

The marines removed their helmets and precariously tossed them to the ground, not caring if any damage was done. They needed more air, and the helmets were getting in the way of their breathing.

Jacob glanced up at Shay'est to see if she was okay, but his line of sight toward her was quickly and suddenly cut off by the Gunnery Sergeant, who leapt at him, throwing her arms around him and holding him tightly.

"Thank godâ€¦ You'reâ€¦ Alrightâ€¦" She said between breaths.

Jacob looked up at Shay'est, who was looking back at him, watching them hug. She quickly looked down to check her gun, inspecting that everything was still working on it, distracting herself from him and pretending she hadn't seen anything.

"Yeah, I'm glad you're okay too." Jacob mustered his lungs to say, once he had finally caught his breath. "What the hell were you thinking back there? Calling attention to yourself with such a big fire fight? Are you nuts?"

Courtney laughed and nuzzled her face into his neck. "Sorry, but I was beginning to get the feeling I'd lost you, and I didn't care if I lived or died anymoreâ€¦" She said with a smile on her face.

"Well, don't do that okay? Even if I end up dying, doesn't mean you have to. You're that competitive that you'll even try and get a better death than me? Damnâ€¦" He said, eventually prying her away from him.

Courtney looked over toward Shay'est, and then back at Jacob. "Soâ€¦" She said "Care to explain?"

"Well," Jacob began, scratching his head and looking over at Shay'est, who was now sitting down cross-legged, still attempting to fully regain her breath "It's like thisâ€¦ I helped her out, so she's helping me find all you guys. She's the reason we were able to make it to you without being killed." He defended his new teammate with a gawkish grin.

Courtney walked over to Shay'est, who looked up nervously at her. They exchanged stares, and Jacob swallowed hard. If they didn't get along, then it could cause many problems in the future. Hopefully if they don't at first, it will just be a phase, like Martin. After a few moments of their stare-off had passed, Courtney thrust out her arm toward Shay'est, offering a handshake.

Shay'est looked at Courtney's hand, shocked and blinking, she then raised her view back up toward Courtney's face. "Thanks for helping my boyfriend find me." She grinned, still maintaining a serious face.

Shay'est nervously accepted the handshake and replied "You are welcome."

The tension in the air between the pair was thick enough to cut with a knife. Jacob coughed nervously and tried to ease the mood. "So!" He said "Everybody's okay? Nobody wounded?"

The group one by one replied with a positive answer, indicating that everyone was alright. Courtney made her way back to Jacob and held his arm close to her, leaning her head on his shoulder. It was then that Jacob caught the scent that she was emitting. It was not nice.

"I think maybeâ€¦ You should take a shower. Water is running in that room over there." He said, holding his nose with one hand and pointing toward the room with a functioning shower with the other. Courtney punched Jacob in the arm and trotted toward the room.

Jacob, rubbing his arm and glaring at the Gunnery Sergeant made his way over to Shay'est and plopped himself down next to her. She looked at him with a light blush and looked down at the floor. "Hey," he asked "How are the stitches feeling? You doing any better?"

She gently looked back at him and smiled nervously. "Yes actually. Sangheili heal much faster than humans do, so I should be alright by tomorrow, so long as I do not do anything strenuous like we did today." She finished, but then suddenly looked down, less happy than she was a second ago whilst speaking to him.

"What's wrong?" Jacob asked.

There was a long hesitation, but when the shower started, Shay'est eventually answered his question. "The female you refer to as 'Courtney'â€¦ Is she your mate?" She didn't look at Jacob as she asked the question, and instead fiddled with her rifle.

Jacob detected a hint of jealousy in her voice, and wanted to say 'what if she is?' or something equally as probing, but decided not to. Instead he decided to tell the truth. "Well," he said "she seems to think so."

Shay'est glanced back up at him, tilting her head again, confused. Jacob thought it was cute when she did this. It reminded him of the way a puppy tilts its head when it was confused. Jacob loved dogs. "What do you mean she thinks so? Do you not think so?"

"Wellâ€¦" he tried to think of a way to put in to words she would understand, but found it quite difficult, so he decided to just go with the truth. It was working quite well for him so far. "I see us more as casual sex partners." He said, trying his best not to blush, and failing.

He was not the only one. Shay'est had gone almost completely purple

in the face and looked away from him suddenly. "Iâ€¦ Seeâ€¦" she slowly replied. She had something on her mind, but Jacob couldn't tell what it was, so he decided to ask.

"Something else on your mind?" he nudged her with his elbow. This caused her to flare up more.

"Uhâ€¦" She began, nervously looking at his leg. He was sitting cross-legged as she was, his hands resting on his knees. His thumb slid over his kneepad, similar to the way it slid over her belly when he patched her up not long ago. On the cold floorâ€¦ As cold as it was in her dream.

She stood up and walked away, nervously coughing. "Uh, no, there is nothing else on my mind. That was all." She said, trying to calm herself and avoid him seeing her nervousness.

"Alright, if you insistâ€¦" he said, watching her walk away. There was something about her walk that caught his eye. He quickly looked away before he began to check her out, and looked over to Martin, who was looking back at him with a grin, and shaking his head. "What?" Jacob asked.

"Oh nothing, playboy." He snickered, as he reloaded a fresh magazine into his pistol.

"Whateverâ€¦" Jacob chuckled back, before slumping onto the floor on his back. He gave a sigh and began to stare at the ceiling. Things were going to be tense from here on with both of those girls around. If they didn't become friends soon, he was worried there might be an outburst between them.

19. Chapter 19

19.

**Location: Cafeteria, Domo Training Simulation Facility 06, Vadam Keep, Sanghelios
>Timestamp: November 19**** 2551. 011:25 hours.
>Unit ID: Shay'est (Female, 6'1") Sangheili, Domo recruit.
Status: Functioning.**

Shay'est was eating alone today. The other females were off with the males that they each had taken a liking to, which left her alone for lunch. She still sat at the table the females normally sat at. She liked to keep as close to the norm as she possibly could. She also didn't want any males attempting to get 'territorial' on her over where they sit, so she defended her table.

She was happily eating alone, when a male approached her table, also alone. This was no regular male, not one who would approach with his friends, attempting to show off and try to impress her. Instead, this male asked politely if he could sit with her. This had never happened before, so Shay'est was initially thrown off a little.

After a moment passed she accepted and he sat across from her. It was then that she got a glimpse of who the male was. This male was Thel'Watamee, a particular male that Shay'est had had her eye on for some time now. She nervously looked back down at her food, afraid he

would catch her looking at him.

She tried not to blush, as she had been meaning to talk to this male about starting a relationship, but did not want to just say it out of the blue. If her friends were here, they would be able to help her with what to say, or how to open the conversation with him. She didn't know how to start talking, and instead began to stare at her food as it slowly got cold. How could she ask him if-

"Do you have a mate?" a voice casually invaded her ears.

Shay'est froze. Did he really ask that? Was he interested in her? Shay'est clenched her fists and her eyes widened. Her face began to blush very hard. She didn't know exactly how to react. Her mind was scrambling for what to say. She didn't want to come off as desperate, but at the same time she didn't want to sound like she didn't want to be with him either.

"No." Eventually she replied shakily. She calmed herself a little and continued with "How about you?"

Shay'est finally reached for her fork and continued eating her food. It was still warm, but not hot anymore. Maybe it was her face that had heated up so much that she felt like the food wasn't as hot anymore. She glanced up and noticed he was speaking, and shook the foolish thoughts from her mind, now listening intently on what he had to say.

"So that was the end of that. Now I don't really have a mate, no." He replied, still eating his food, and not looking up from it.

"I see." She replied, trying to keep the conversation flowing. "Well, do you have any other partners in mind?" She asked as casually as she possibly could, but at the same time she couldn't stop both of her hearts from throbbing at irregular intervals. When one throbbed, the other followed, and the first one quickly after that. She could barely hear his voice over the sound of blood rushing through her head.

"Well, I might." He said, still casual, but moving into more of a suave conversation. "It depends on how this particular female reacts to me asking her if she would like to pair up to be my mate."

Shay'est knew he was talking about her. She knew he was. He had to be. There was no way he would just come out and say this to her, would he? She went back to eating her food, but intently listening for anything else he had to say. Her hands were shaking a little, so she focused also on preventing that from continuing.

There was a silence, but it was soon broken by a "Well?" from Thel'Watamee, and Shay'est suddenly put down her fork. Her eyes widened once again and her mouth slowly widened also.

"W-well what?" She nervously asked.

"What do you say? Would you like to be my mate?"

Shay'est exploded with excitement on the inside. She could feel her hearts racing and wanted to stand up and scream in joy. She

remained seated however, and tried to muster up as calm a tone as she could. "Perhaps. You seem eligible enough." She said, acting unsure, when really she wanted nothing more. She began to take another mouthful of food.

"Well, if it helps you to decide, my previous mate said that I was good at mating." He added nervously. He wanted her, and she knew it. _He knew_ she knew it.

Shay'est choked on her mouthful of food, not expecting him to say what he had said. She pounded her chest as she choked, attempting to help the food make its way down her throat.

"Are you alright?" he asked, standing to his feet, over the table. Thel'Watamee stood a whopping 7'4" tall when outstretched, and could easily reach across the table to her. "Do you need some water?"

Shay'est finally swallowed her food, shaking her head. She took a deep breath and sighed, her eyes closed in relief. She opened her left eye and looked up at him, still massaging her chest with her right hand, helping any remaining food go down and attempting to ease the pain. "I am alright. That was quite embarrassing." She blushed, closing her eye again.

"That is quite alright. As long as you are okay." Thel'Watamee slowly sat back down "Honestly, I sometimes find myself stumbling when talking to females as you just did, but this time it was not me. I am quite glad." He said with a chuckle.

Shay'est nervously shared a laugh with him, and then went back to eating her food. By now it was starting to go cold, so she decided to finish it. Thel'Watamee also finished his food. After they were both finished, Shay'est placed her elbows on the table and leaned her head on her hands.

Thel'Watamee was less of a ladies man than many of the women thought he was. When he thought a female was cute, he was nervous around her. _Very_ nervous. "Um. So! Uhâ€¦" He hesitated, searching for something to say. "You umâ€¦ Have beautiful eyes!"

Shay'est blushed gently, but didn't shift her pose. Instead she used this to her advantage. She gently batted her eyelids and said "Thanks. I like your muscles." She didn't really find anything particularly attractive about his physique at all. That didn't matter to her, but she thought she may as well compliment him also.

"Um, thank you!" He said cheerfully. "So, do you have any plans for today?"

"Well," She replied, finally sitting back in her normal sitting position "I was going to spend the day with my friends, but they have all gone off with their mates. How about you?"

"Wellâ€¦ Um." He scratched the back of his head "My big plan for today was to ask you to be my mate, apart from that nothing. Do you want to spend some time together?"

That was how their relationship started. They hit it off pretty well, and eventually became very close. That was of course, until she

caught him cheating on her with one of her female friends.

20. Chapter 20

20.

****Location:** Numbuoy Apartments, Level 1, New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.

>Timestamp: October 21****st****** 2552. 16:40 hours.******

>Unit ID: Corporal Jacob Matthews (Male, 25, 5'11"), Orbital Drop Shock Trooper, 7****th****** Shock Troopers Battalion.

>Status: Functioning.

Jacob sat with his back against the wall. He had his right leg perched up, resting its weight on his left knee with the underside of his right knee, and began kicking his leg into the air. He was wondering what there would be to do; knowing that there was no power at the moment meant that there was no television. Then again, after that shockwave he couldn't even get into communication with his commanders, let alone get a satellite television program to come through.

He sighed and rolled his head to the left. His vision was met with that of Shay'est, who smiled at him nervously. Jacob smiled back, but as he did so, he noticed Courtney approaching from the rooms, now having finished her shower. She didn't look very happy that Jacob was smiling at Shay'est, so his smile faded.

She glared at Shay'est as she walked past and made her way over to Jacob. She sat beside him and leant her head on his shoulder. She kissed him on the cheek and whispered "You know, just because she's helping you, doesn't mean you have to be friends."

Jacob hesitated, still looking at Shay'est, who (now that Courtney had arrived) diverted her attention to getting to know Martin a little better. She sat beside him, asking how they were able to breathe in the helmets they wore in combat.

"I know," he finally replied "But I think it's better to have an ally be friendly with you, than have an ally who doesn't trust you."

"Well," Courtney said, shifting her body weight so that she stood back up "don't get too close. I don't trust her."

Jacob knew she didn't, but there was no need to share this with him "Look," he replied, also standing himself up "you may not trust her just yet, but I've been with her for almost a whole day now, and she hasn't turned on me at all. You're acting more hostile at the moment than she is."

Courtney tutted and walked over to the window to look outside to cool herself off. She clearly sensed a fight coming on, and didn't want to lose Jacob over something so petty.

Jacob walked over to where Shay'est and Martin were sitting, and sat next to Shay'est, mainly to spite Courtney. Jacob was sitting on his

knees, with his toes bent upward and his weight being shared equally between them, as he often did. The pair of them were talking about how the oxygen intake in the helmets worked. Shay'est foolishly tried to fit the helmet over her face to see if it would work, but it ended up getting stuck.

The boys had a good laugh as she tried to feel around with her hands for a way to pry it off. As much as this amused Jacob, he didn't want her to get hurt. "Stop, stop, here let me." He said, slowly removing the helmet by reversing the movements she made to put it on.

As it came off, they found themselves looking into each other's eyes. "Thank you." She smiled and looked down. Her face went very purple as she found that her hand had found its way to Jacob's leg and was now resting on his thigh. She quickly removed her hand and looked away.

Jacob gently chuckled and put the helmet down beside him. As he did so however, he felt his stomach growl. He placed his left hand on his stomach, hoping that nobody else had heard it, but Shay'est did.

"Hungry?" She asked, tilting her head and smiling.

"Haha, yeah I guess I could eat. Anyone else hungry?" he called out. "Cos I'm gonna go search for some food."

He stood up, and so did Shay'est. He tilted his head toward her, silently inquiring as to what she was doing.

"I may as well come with you. What if you run into some brutes while you're out there?" She grinned.

Jacob hesitated for a moment, waiting for Courtney's rebuttal, but he only heard a grunt from her direction. "Alright, I guess so. Be back soon you two." He said, turning around and walking toward the door, picking up his now reloaded SMG on the way there. He didn't wear his helmet, as he thought he wouldn't need it.

They made their way down to the streets and walked down the street toward the restaurants. The rain began to fall, so they quickly headed for cover. The only nearby cover was at an abandoned café, and even then only a small material sheet that arched out just overhead. There wasn't much room, so the pair was packed in tight.

The two of them were dripping wet from the rain, and Jacob's fringe was flopping down over his face, drooping in front of his eyes. Shay'est laughed at him, as it reminded her of a shaggy dog. Without thinking she reached out and swept his hair aside so he could see past it again.

Jacob gently smiled at her and told her to take a step back. She did so, and he lunged up and rolled over the counter. Once inside, he waved his hand, signalling for her to join. Shay'est stepped on one of the stools, and crawled onto the counter. She was bigger than Jacob was, so found herself unable to manoeuvre as well as he could, having to rotate on the top of the counter, to bring herself back down legs first on the side Jacob was now on.

Jacob chuckled and shook his head. "Here, let me help." He said as he made his way over. He reached out and placed his hand on her hip to help her down. As his hand made contact, Shay'est flinched, but then slowly continued down until she joined him back on the floor.

"Thank you. Now let us search for some food." She said with a smile.

Jacob nodded, and turned around, making his way into the kitchen. He had partly expected the food resources to have been taken by looters who had survived the shockwave, but it seemed to be still intact. There were resources aplenty. There were gas stoves they could use to heat their food and a sink too.

Jacob turned the tap to find the water was still running. He thanked his lucky stars that they would be able to have something to drink, at last. He held his head under the tap and drank a few mouthfuls of water. He wiped his mouth and tilted his head back with an
"_Aaahâ€¦|_"

Shay'est giggled, and walked over to the boxes of food. "Hey" she asked "Should we take some of these back to the others? That way we don't have to come all the way down here to eat." She said, pointing at bottled water and boxes of noodles.

That was a good idea. Jacob's campfire would do for heating them up, and the water could be used to cook them in. He nodded and grabbed a pot to cook them in. Shay'est took the boxes and placed them on the counter. Jacob hopped over next to them and helped Shay'est back over the same way he helped her get in.

The pair took the supplies back up to the others who were patiently waiting together inside. Finally they had something to eat, and could sit down and enjoy a nice meal.

21. Chapter 21

21.

****Location:** Numbuoy Apartments, Level 1, New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.

>Timestamp: October 21****st****** 2552. 16:50 hours.**

>Unit ID: Corporal Jacob Matthews (Male, 25, 5'11"), Orbital Drop Shock Trooper, 7****th****** Shock Troopers Battalion.

>Status: Functioning.

The pair of them came near the end of the stairwell; about to enter the area the others were in, when suddenly Jacob was stopped by a firm grip on his left shoulder. He stopped and spun around on his left heel to find Shay'est blushing; having placed the boxes of food they had scavenged on the step beside her.

"Jacobâ€¦|" She said in a voice so soft that it was little more than a whisper. "I have something to ask youâ€¦|" She said, staring into his eyes, her face reddening by the second.

Jacob hesitated for a moment, considering all of the possibilities of

what she could have been about to ask, before swallowing and replying "Sure, what's up?"

"Wellâ€¦ You seeâ€¦" She looked down at her feet, shifting them nervously against the floor. "I wanted to know why it is you decided to help me last night, in the alleyway." After finishing her sentence she looked up to make eye contact and view his reaction.

Jacob wasn't entirely sure himself why he had saved her. His answer took him a few moments to search for. He went over a few ways he could portray his answer to her, but only one of them came across as the best way to go about it.

"Seemed like a good idea at the time." He replied with a grin.

The two of them shared a laugh, and Jacob turned around to proceed up the stairs.

"Do you regret your decision to save me?"

The question made him hesitate again, but this time his answer didn't take him as long to find.

"Not for a second." He said as he continued into the room where the others awaited them.

Shay'est smiled, giggling to herself in joy, picked up the boxes, and followed him in.

They walked in to find Martin trying to balance his knife on the end of his finger, and Courtney sitting, watching him, begging for it to fall and for him to hurt himself so she could have a good laugh.

After finally noticing their return, Martin spoke. "Hey Jacob, I've been thinkingâ€¦"

"Oh no, what now?" He replied jokingly.

"Well, we I think we deserve a raise."

Jacob blinked and once again examined what Techie was doing. He was balancing a knife on his finger, not doing anything positive to help. Yes. He definitely deserved a raise.

"You must be high. Command would never authorize a pay increase for clown tricks and you know it." He chuckled back, dumping the box of water bottles on the floor beside them, and then sitting down next to it.

"Yeah, I guess notâ€¦ Would be pretty cool if they did though. Could you imagine units storming an enemy base throwing pies and coming in clown cars and unicycles? That would _really_ fuck with their heads!" Techie said, laughing at his own joke.

"And result in many casualties I would assume." Courtney dully replied.

Techie shot her a glance. "Mood killerâ€¦"

There was a moment of silence after Shay'est put the noodles down and sat between Jacob and Courtney, that being the only available spot in the circle in which they sat together. Courtney shot her a jealous look, but Shay'est pretended not to notice. "Courtney," Shay'est asked.

"What?" she grouchily replied.

"I was just wondering, what is your call sign? I know Martin's call sign is 'Techie' and Jacob's call sign is 'Shadow'. I was just wondering what yours was." She finished her question, giving her usual head tilt of curiosity.

Courtney grinned "Havoc's my call sign. It's 'cos I wreak havoc on any enemy that dares to oppose me!" She boasted loudly.

"Interestingâ€|" Shay'est replied. Jacob could tell by her tone that she was only interested in knowing the nickname, not the reason.

Jacob began setting up the campfire to cook the food in, but Shay'est still had more questions to ask.

"Courtney, may I ask you another question?" She asked.

"Fine, shoot."

"I do not mean to harm you; I only want to ask a question." She said frantically.

"It's just a figure of speechâ€|" What's with the 20 questions anyway?" She said, dismissively waving her hand.

"I only asked you two questionsâ€|" She replied, confused. She turned her head to Jacob and inquired "Does Courtney not know how to count properly?"

Jacob and Techie quickly glanced at each other and began to snicker and laugh. Courtney however was less than amused.

"_What did you just say?_" She asked, her face furiously reddening. She turned to Jacob. "Are you going to let her talk to me like that?" she said, pointing at the elite.

Once Jacob had finally caught his breath again, he inhaled sharply and replied "Sure why not? She doesn't mean any harm; she's just curious how we operate." Jacob was still giggling whilst he spoke.

"And do you think we should be telling the enemy how we operate? That goes against a lot of what we went through in training! Remember the rigorous interrogation resistance sessions? After all that you still end up cooperating with them so freely?"

"Hey, hey, calm down Courts." Jacob replied, putting his hands up in an attempt to calm her.

"What, did she flash her tits and you're all for her now?" She began to yell in her tantrum.

Jacob blushed and scratched his neck, suddenly nervous upon recalling the awkward moment in the shower the two had experienced earlier. "Uh, well it's not like thatâ€¦" he said, not making eye contact, and instead glancing over to Shay'est.

She knew exactly what he was thinking about, and she blushed too. Her blushing caused her to recall a certain _other_ memory, causing her to blush even harder and clear her throat nervously.

Courtney was very suspicious and this only fuelled her rage. "What, she did? What the _fuck!_ How dare she try and charm my man?" She screamed.

Jacob cocked an eyebrow, suddenly serious. "_Your_ man?" he enquired. "Whatever do you mean by that?"

Jacob knew they were about to get into some uncharted territory, and things were about to boil over. Speaking of which, the noodles were about done, so he began to finish off the noodles.

Courtney was still yelling at him, despite Martin nervously attempting to ease her with words from his safe sitting distance, out of arm's reach. The words however went in one ear, and out the other. Jacob had learned not to pay attention when she got like this, because she tended to say things he didn't want to hear.

"It's _over!_" some of her words got through. "We're finished!" She said, beginning to walk away "I don't care if you die out here!" She yelled, grabbing her gun as she walked out the door.

There was a long awkward silence, before Jacob cried out "So do you want me to give your noodles to Shay'est, or what?" to irritate her further.

He heard her shriek in anger as she continued to storm off. Jacob turned to the others and said "I wonder if 'Crazy Bitch' was a more appropriate nickname for her, not you." He nodded toward Shay'est, as he carried the noodle pot to the others. "Let's dig in. We're going to need the energy if we're going to continue looking for Tank and Romeo." He said, nodding at Martin.

Martin nodded back and looked toward Shay'est, who was a strange, pale colour. "Something wrong?" he asked.

She quickly put her hand up toward her mouth, shot up and ran for the bathroom.

Jacob looked at her, worriedly, and glanced back to Techie, who was less than helpful in the situation, and who decided to share some more of his humour. "Are you sure you didn't knock her up?"

****Hey readers!****

>Sorry I haven't been updating recently. I really do appreciate how patient you've been, and I promise you I'm going to get through this block and over my workload to bring you more chapters.

****For those who are interested, I'll also provide a link at the bottom of the next chapter in the section you're reading now, to my**

novel I'm writing on the side. I'm calling it 'Trivial Killing', for those who wanted to know. :)**

Thanks again for reading! Be sure to continue reviewing, and I'll be sure to continue writing! :)

22. Chapter 22

22.

**Location: Numbuoy Apartments, Level 1, New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.

>Timestamp: October 21**st**** 2552. 17:00 hours.**

>Unit ID: Shay'est (Female, 6'1") Sangheili, Minor Domo.
Status: Functioning, expelling stomach contents into toilet.**

She felt a burning sensation as her stomach lurched. She felt the bile in her stomach rise rapidly through her throat, and she could do nothing but allow it to spew out into the toilet dish. She shut her eyes tight as the bile from her stomach hit the bowl and made its way down into the centre of the toilet, where the water was sitting.

Tears began to stream down her cheeks as she tried to catch her breath. She heard the door open, but didn't look up to see who it was, on fear that in doing so she may need to puke again, missing the toilet. Instead, she removed her helmet, and tossed it to the ground beside her, carelessly, her head remaining in the dish at all times.

She felt something warm and soft gently being placed on the back of her neck, and begin to massage soothingly up and down. This was a hand. She wasn't sure whose hand it was, but she had a pretty good idea.

"Hey, you alright?" a voice came from behind her, confirming her suspicion that the person who came to her aid was indeed Jacob.

"Yes, I think so, I justâ€¦" She felt more coming up, but it seemed to stop and ease its way back down. "I just feel really bad that I got between you and your mate." She began to stare into the centre of the bowl.

"Really? That's enough to make you throw up?" He tilted his head in shock. "Well, don't worry. She can't end something that wasn't there to begin with." He said to comfort her.

"She did not seem to think there was nothing between the pair of you." She muttered.

"Don't worry, this isn't the first time she's had a tantrum. However being that she's feeling particularly vengeful, when we go out into the streets, we may want to look out for snipers a little more. She can be a pretty good shot when she's pissed." Jacob warned.

"Oh dear, do you think she will try to kill us?" Shay'est worriedly

said, her worry bringing up some more contents from her stomach, and causing her to spew it into the bowl.

"Hey, hey, easyâ€|" Jacob said, massaging her neck some more "I was only kidding." He smiled, keeping as calm a voice as he could muster.

His words eased her mind a little, but not very much. "I still feel quite terrible about it."

He chuckled. "Don't worry, I'm sure she'll come crawling back soon enough."

Shay'est's stomach had settled enough for her to lean back on her knees and sit upright. "And why is that?"

"Well," Jacob said, moving the hand that was on her neck to rest on her shoulder. "We have plenty of food and water." He said smiling.

"And what is stopping her from-" she was cut off as she lost balance, falling toward him. He caught her by the shoulder and rested her against his torso, his arm now over her left shoulder. She blushed, and continued her question "from taking her own food from the store like we did?"

Jacob chuckled, and leaned his head in against hers. Shay'est's eyes widened as her face blushed heavily. He moved his lips to the hole in the side of her head where she heard through, like a human ear, and whispered "Because she can't cook for shit."

Shay'est looked away and giggled to herself, still blushing. Jacob chuckled too, also with a soft red colour across his cheeks. She turned back toward him and smiled gently.

"Feeling better?" he asked, smiling gently in return.

"A little, yes." She gently rested her hand on her stomach.

"Well enough to return to Martin? I'm sure if we don't go back soon he'll eat all the noodles." He laughed.

Shay'est giggled then nodded. "I think so. Maybe my hunger was also getting to me. Perhaps that contributed to the sickening sensation I felt."

"Yeah, maybe." Jacob said. His stomach growled and gurgled. He clutched it and smiled at her "I'm getting pretty starved myself. Let's go back. Here, let me help you up." He said, taking her right hand in his and lifting it over his shoulder. As he did so, he lowered his left hand to meet her hip.

The pair slowly made their way out to where Martin was eagerly waiting. When he saw them he grinned cheekily and said "So, is it a boy or a girl? What are you going to name it? Can I be the godfather? I've always wanted to introduce myself as somebody's godfather!" he finished, suddenly excited by the thought.

Shay'est looked at Jacob, puzzled. Jacob blushed and explained the situation to her. "Martin thinks I've gotten you pregnant. I'm sure

he's only kidding though." He chuckled, looking away to hide his blush.

Shay'est's face lit up purple. "Wh- _what?_ What would make you think such a thing? I would not do that with Jacob!" as the words left her mouth she recalled her dream, and thought she may have been wrong about that. She quickly corrected herself to take back any offense she may have caused "I mean, it's not that I would_ not_ I justâ€¦"

Now she was worried she sounded like she wanted to. She attempted to correct herself again "I mean, I'm not necessarily saying that I _would_ either, I meanâ€¦"

Jacob laughed, and pressed a finger against her mouth. "Shh, you're only gonna dig yourself into a deeper hole. Just shh." He chuckled as he moved his hand back to hold her right arm over his shoulder.

Shay'est remained bright purple until the pair sat down. He gently helped her to sit, careful not to rupture her stitching. He decided to take a look at it to see how it was going. He was surprised to find the wound almost completely healed.

"Hey! Your wound! It's almost all better!" he exclaimed happily, pointing at the dressing.

"Yes, it is. Sangheili heal very fast compared to humans." She smiled.

"Good! Well," Jacob said "we can remove that dressing whenever you like."

"Good, because I believe it is really starting to stick to my skin." She said, hunched over, observing her wound.

"Do you know how to remove it?" Jacob said, slightly blushing, forgetting a minor detail, and hoping the answer to his question was yes.

"Do I just pull it off?" she said, grabbing at a loose flap on the corner.

"No! Nonononoâ€¦". He said, stopping her hand from doing damage to herself "They need to be removed under water. It doesn't matter if it's running water or flat water, but water. And they need to be removed carefully. Gently, otherwise they could pull the wound open again."

Shay'est's next words came out without her thinking. "Could you please do it for me then?" After they left her mouth, she blushed and took the plate of noodles that Jacob was handing her. Jacob also blushed at the thought of being in the shower with her again. This time however it would be intentional.

"Um, sure. I guess." He said, grabbing a plate of food for himself. There were plates still left in the nearby dining area of the hotel floor they were on, that Martin was clever enough to pinch for them whilst they were fetching the food from the cafÃ©.

The group ate their food together and had a few moments to relax. They sat together around the campfire, trying to stay warm. The weather was beginning to get colder. It was raining outside, and the wind was blowing fiercely.

Shay'est edged her way closer to Jacob, sharing some of his body warmth with her, and in exchange, sharing her warmth with him. She gently rested her head on his shoulder, blushing while doing so. She wasn't sure how he would react to this, and was worried he would get upset, but was happily surprised to feel his head against the top of hers.

She smiled and closed her eyes. She never dreamed she would get this close with a human. Jacob rested his hand on hers and nudged her with his elbow.

"Hey," he said. "Should we go get that bandage off?" he smiled as he finished his sentence, blushing.

Shay'est blushed back and nodded, still smiling. They stood up together and headed toward the shower. Jacob glanced back to Martin, sure that he would have something to add, but was pleasantly surprised to see his friend grin and give him a thumbs up.

Thanks mate. He thought as he continued down the hall toward the rooms with Shay'est.

****Hey guys + gals (if there are any female readers :o)**
>Just a longer chapter this time to make up for the big gap I left you without material for :
>Sorry again about that. ^.^'

****By the way, the first chapter of my novel 'Trivial Killing' is live and can be read here!**
>.comstory/story_?storyid=3020557&chapter=1 (Just type 'login . fictionpress' without the spaces before the link address and you should be good to go!)
>

****As always, keep reading and reviewing, and I'll keep writing!****

23. Chapter 23

23.

****Location: Numbuoy Apartments, Level 1, New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.**
>Timestamp: October 21****st**** 2552. 17:09 hours.****
>Unit ID: Shay'est (Female, 6'1") Sangheili, Minor Domo.
Status: Functioning.**

Shay'est could feel her hearts racing in her chest. She heard throbbing in her ears from the blood rushing through her head. Her hands were trembling. Was she really about to strip down in front of Jacob and get in the shower with him?

She walked into the bathroom, her face burning from the blush. She

took a few steps forward, before looking to the right, at which point she saw herself in the mirror. Jacob hadn't entered the bathroom yet, so she took a second to examine herself, so that she could see what he was about to see. Her figure was in pleasant shape, considering her wound. She then looked up to see her face, and how purple it was. Seeing it didn't help. Her face went even brighter purple and covered her cheeks with her hands.

Her hands felt enjoyably cool against her burning cheeks. She looked away from the mirror so as to avoid further self-embarrassment. She heard the bathroom door click shut and knew Jacob had entered the room. She felt her face grew even more purple, by some incredible feat.

"You okay?" She heard his voice hum from behind her.

She quickly spun about and looked him in the face. He was leant over, trying to see her face from when she was facing away a moment ago. He had a big, welcoming smile across his face. It was enough for her to smile back.

"Yes, I am fine. I just don't know if I am ready to show you myself without anything covering me." She blushed as the words left her mouth.

"What do you mean? I saw you nude a while ago, remember? In this same room in fact!" He chuckled cheekily.

She felt like her face was about to supernova. Why would he bring that up _now?_ That didn't _help!_ She scrambled for random thoughts that would make her feel less embarrassed. She needed to calm down.

"You know, you don't need to feel so bad about being embarrassed."

Jacob's voice surprised her this time.

"Why would you think that I am embarrassed?" She sputtered.

"Well, why should be embarrassed in a situation like this. Its normal. I sure as hell am." He blushed.

"Why are you embarrassed? What reason do you have to be embarrassed?" She asked.

"Well," he replied, starting to unclip his left shoulder pad "I don't feel like having to dry this damn suit off, and it's a pain in the ass to put on and take off when it's wet. It sticks to you." He said as he began to pull his left arm out of his sleeve.

Her arms began to tremble and her lower left mandible began to follow suit. She looked away quickly, her eyes wide. She felt a bead of sweat roll down the left side of her face. She was _freaking out._ Why did he have to strip off? This only brought back thoughts of her dream! _THIS WAS NOT HELPING HER CALM DOWN!_

"Hey." His voice made her startle, and turn around again. "It's alright, you don't have to panic. It's not like I'm going to assault you or anything." He chuckled again. "We're just taking off a

bandage, it's not like we're about to have sex."

The last word repeated in her head. _SEXâ€|_

Oh god, noâ€|

Her legs began to tremble too, as she slowly bent down to remove her leg armour. The further she worked her way up her leg, the more she realized that she didn't have to feel embarrassed about this. Jacob was right. They weren't really doing anything sexual; it was only removing a bandage!

She glanced up at him. He was removing his right shoulder pad. She decided to try and get an embarrassing reaction out of him, seeing as how he'd gotten so many from her. Her turn for revenge was now. She feigned that her stitching hurt, and clutched her side gently.

Jacob quickly snapped to attention and looked at her. "You alright?"

Got you nowâ€|

She popped her crotch plating off, and looked tenderly up at him, blushing gently, with half open eyes, pushing her body to look as sexy as she could. "I am fineâ€| Why do you ask?" she said as she slowly moved the plating away.

Her plan worked flawlessly. Jacob's face went a deep shade of red and he quickly spun around with an _eek_.

She giggled to herself with satisfaction. Finally she got him to act so cutely. She quite liked this side of him. Less authoritative and not knowing quite what to do. He scrambled for his zipper so he could take the rest of his top off and slide out.

Once out of his armour, he turned about, back toward her, only wearing boxer shorts. Shay'est's face lit up once again, as she caught herself examining his body. His chest was muscular, and his biceps had been worked to perfection. She quickly averted her gaze upwards and away from his abs, however this only led to his face. She found herself looking into his eyes when he winked at her.

She spun around and coughed nervously and continued to shakily remove her armour. _Dammit! He made a comeback so quickly?_

She finally finished removing her armour and stepped into the shower, turning the water on and allowing some to run onto her body. This would get him, for _sure._ She looked back over to him with a gentle sigh, her eyes open the same way they were before, and still blushing. She noticed a certain something 'come up' as she did so.

She giggled, blushed and looked away. It wasn't overly great, but not small either. She soon realized what she had found herself thinking about and shook these thoughts as soon as she could. "U-um." She stuttered "Can we get this bandage off please?" she said, sitting down against the cold wall of the shower, getting ready in a position in which he could easily access the wound.

"Uh, right! Sure! Umâ€|" Jacob replied, scratching his head and

pulling down at the end of his boxers in an attempt to hide his manhood a little better. It didn't help. In fact, it came dangerously close to popping out between the buttons on the front. He quickly knelt down to get out of this situation as soon as possible.

The water met his head and he found his hair flopping down onto his face. He shuffled over her leg so his shin was close to her groin. His face was burning. He didn't care. He just didn't want her to see.

Shay'est moved Jacob's hair out of the way. He looked up at her quickly, his gaze meeting her bosom, and then quickly shooting up to her eyes. She tilted her head and smiled. "I like your hair" She whispered.

He started to stutter a 'thank-you' and then swallowed hard. His hands got shaky and he realized her thigh that was between his legs began to rise slowly, bringing him closer to her. His chest began to thump. He began to realize his breathing was heavy. His vision became shakier as his face burned badly.

His hands reached out to remove the bandage, but as they met her body, Shay'est raised her leg further, so that his hands met her hips, using them to clumsily, but as gently as he could, stop himself. He looked up to find her face inches from his. She was bright purple, and he knew she was really putting herself out there. He knew what she was doing felt extremely risky for her, so he decided to indulge her.

He moved his face closer to hers, closing his eyes. Before his closed, he saw hers close too. He felt her arms embrace around him and pull him close, her chest pressing against his. He felt water running down his face and between their bodies. Their faces came closer and closer, and it seemed like forever before they finally met.

****Hey readers! :D**

**>Quite a long chapter this time, but I'm sure you found it was worth it ;D
Let me know what you think in the reviews! :)****

****Also, I just wanted everyone to know that my novel isn't getting as much love as I wanted :'(**

**>If you wouldn't mind and you are interested, check it out here!
login . fictionpress .**

com/story/story_?storyid=3020557&chapter=1

>If I don't upload to EME, I'll upload to my novel, so that way you don't feel like you've missed out ;)

24. Chapter 24

24.

****Location: Numbuoy Apartments, Level 1, New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.**

>Timestamp: October 21st**** 2552. 17:36 hours.****

>Unit ID: Corporal Jacob Matthews (Male, 25, 5'11"), Orbital Drop Shock Trooper, 7th**** Shock Troopers Battalion.**

>Status: Functioning.

Jacob walked out into the open area where Martin had taken down the television and was now messing with the back of it, somehow connecting it to his helmet. Jacob didn't have his gloves on, and hadn't had them on since he had come back with Courtney, before they went to the noodle store. He looked down at his fingers to examine the pruning that was engulfing his fingertips. Everything felt sensitive at the moment. He wasn't sure whether it had to do with what he and Shay'est had just done in the shower, orâ€|

"What the fuck are you doing?" He asked Martin, his curiosity tearing him apart inside as he contemplated other thoughts, like a time bomb ticking away in the back of his mind and finally exploding.

Martin jumped and snapped his vision to Jacob. His look of concentration was replaced with one of bewilderment as he then glanced down at his watch. He looked up at Jacob once more before asking "What the hell took you so long? What were you twoâ€| Never mind," he suddenly stopped himself, with a grin budding across his face "I know exactly what you two were up toâ€|"

Jacob's face flushed a little. He hadn't realized until now that he had been in there for almost half an hour with her. He had hoped that Martin wouldn't notice. How unfortunate it is when one is wrong.

"I- I don't know what you meanâ€|" He stuttered "And you didn't answer my question! What are you doing with the telly?" He tried to hide his blush, and this time was somehow successful.

"How was she?" he said with a smirk.

"Dude!"

"Fine!" he sighed, looking back down to the work he was doing "I'm hooking up the television to my helmet's reception. Televisions have shit reception, but my helmet's is great, and the only thing with the television now is that the reception is broken from the EMP of the shockwave. The power is working fine."

Jacob stood, frozen in shock. "What?" he sputtered "Since when? I thought the power was dead!"

Martin looked up, cocking an eyebrow "Dude, it came back last night when you were in bed. With her I might add." He finished, pointing his screwdriver over to Shay'est, who was now walking into the hall.

Shay'est saw the screwdriver aimed at her and the boys looking her way. She blushed and looked away. She was still trying to grasp the fact that they had just done what they had done in the shower moments ago.

Martin scoffed and went back to working on the back of the television, but moments later, a spark erupted from the back of it with a crack! Martin jumped back, raised his hands in the air and said "Woahâ€|"

Jacob started a slow, sarcastic clap. "Bravo mate," he applauded "Bravoâ€|"

"Shut up!" Martin muttered, returning to the television, only to start hearing a soft noise. This noise was slightly static but there was clearly sound coming from the set. He slowly lifted it to reveal that the television was in fact getting a signal. A poor signal, but it was watchable.

"Yes!" Jacob fist-pumped "No more boredom for us!" he cried in excitement.

"What is that?" Shay'est asked, pointing curiously at the television.

"Hm? Oh that's a telly. You can watch shows through it." Jacob said, calming his laughter slightly.

She looked at him with a look of greater bewilderment. "How? What is a 'show'?"

Jacob and Martin looked at each other, then Jacob looked back at her "Just don't worry about it. Let's put it back up, sit back and watch."

The two guys lifted the television back onto its wall mount and picked up the couch that had been overturned by the shockwave. They hadn't noticed this couch before, because it had been pushed behind some tables by the jump.

As they plopped themselves down on the couch, they witnessed dust flow up around them in a swirling cloud. Just as they were getting comfortable to start watching television, the helmets made a familiar beeping noise.

The boys groaned and stood up begrudgingly. Just as they'd gotten comfortable, someone else had activated their beacon. This was not their week.

Martin picked up his helmet and examined the ID that was pinging them. It was the captain's. David knew what he was doing, if they pinged him back, he could easily make his way over to them. David was the best in their team at combat, and decent at stealth tactics. David making his way to them would be a piece of cake, compared to them making their way to him.

After some discussion, they decided that they should tell David to meet them at their hideout. They sat back down on the couch and Shay'est joined them, sitting down with such elegance that it made the boys look almost clumsy. Jacob admired the elegance she used when showing off her slender figure. She had a decent body and she knew it. She used it to her advantage.

Jacob began touching his thumb to his fingers, checking to see if they were as sensitive feeling as they were a few moments ago. This happened to him every time after he had sex. He felt highly sensitive. His fingers didn't feel as bad any more. The sensitivity didn't last long.

Jacob glanced over to Shay'est to see how she was reacting to what had just happened. She was watching television, blushing, but acting as though everything was normal. She felt that Jacob was watching

her, so she slouched down and leant over, resting her head on his shoulder.

Martin heard another beeping noise coming from the helmet. He picked it up and examined the HUD. It turned out that the captain had received their location and was on his way to meet them. He informed the two lovebirds and they continued watching television, but they weren't paying attention to it (apart from Shay'est) as the boys were instead trying to figure out how they would explain Shay'est to David.

****Hey guys!**

>Sorry I haven't updated recently! ^.^^"

**>I've had a bunch of work for TAFE (which is like university in Australia) and been doing a lot of editing for youtube, and so I haven't had a lot of time to write.
I'm going to try and pick up on the writing, but I won't be updating as frequently as I have recently.****

****Remember to search for my novel on FictionPress****

>Just search "Trivial Killing" And you should find it pretty easily. If I don't update here, I'll update there ;)

>Alright guys! Keep reading!

****And just in case you didn't get it... That wasn't _just_ a kiss in the shower... ;)****

25. Chapter 25

25.

****Location: Numbuoy Apartments, Level 1, New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.**

>Timestamp: October 21st**** 2552. 17:42 hours.****

**>Unit ID: Shay'est (Female, 6'1") Sangheili, Minor Domo.
Status: Functioning.****

Shay'est was entranced by the wondrous device hanging from the wall. Sure, they had broadcast systems similar to this on Sanghelios, but they were used for much more important needs. The humans on this planet seemed to use these systems as a form of basic entertainment. She was baffled that they would use such technology so ungratefully.

She continued to watch until she felt something bump her shoulder, slightly startling her. She turned her head to the right slowly, to find Jacob's head resting on her shoulder. He had fallen asleep. She giggled to herself, but then looked outside. It was dark. _Very_ dark.

"What? When did that happen? How long have we been sitting here? It felt like mere minutes had passed by!" She whispered loudly to Techie.

He looked at her and smirked "That's how television works. You sit here watching for a few moments, and before you know it, hours have passed." He chuckled.

How incredible! Shay'est thought to herself. _The humans have invented a time travel device of some sort! They must be far more intelligent than we had initially anticipated_. She thought to herself, and then she looked down to Jacob.

He was drooling on her shoulder and had begun to snore, his tongue slightly hanging out of his mouth.

Shay'est giggled, covering her mouth with her left hand. "Or perhaps notâ€|" she whispered to herself, avoiding waking up Jacob from his slumber.

"Sorry?" Techie asked "What was that?"

"Oh, nothing. Do not worry." She smiled at him "I think it is time for bed for this one," she said, nudging Jacob slightly, his head bobbed on her shoulder and awoke him, causing him to sit up, eyes half open, and gazing about the room, confused. "Could you please stand guard for us while I put him to bed?" she smiled politely as she asked.

Martin nodded and smiled back. With that, she stood up and clutched Jacob's shoulder. He looked up at her sheepishly with a smile. She blushed and giggled. He sure was an interesting character. Quite adorable indeed. "Time for bed, Jacob."

"Okay, lead the way." He replied, almost muttering it under his breath whilst he attempted to stifle a yawn.

She took his hand in hers, and helped him to his feet. They then proceeded to stumble down the hall together, toward the room they had slept in the night before. Hopefully the bed tonight will be just as comfortable as it was the previous one.

As they reached the bedroom, Shay'est let go of Jacob, confident that he could continue the journey to his bed alone, whilst she closed the door behind them. Once she had done that, and heard the click that confirmed it was closed, she turned around to see Jacob undressing. Her face lit up purple and she started to look away, but stopped suddenly and glanced back at him. He didn't seem to notice she was watching.

She watched him slowly pull his suit down over his shoulders, the moonlight bouncing entrancingly off his flesh. She watched, as the suit fell, almost in slow motion down to his ankles, revealing his boxer shorts he had worn beneath the suit. She felt her heart throb within her chest as she watched him reach down toward his boxers, about to pull them down too.

No matter how much she wanted to look away, she remained fixated on him. She was too embarrassed to watch, but too intoxicated to look away. It felt like she was watching a rat swallow a plasma grenade. Couldn't watch, couldn't look away.

The light that reflected off of his abdominal muscles bounced into her eyes as her mind was engulfed with an ocean of memories that came flooding into her brain from their previous moment in the shower. The feel of his body against hers. The warmth that she felt as they intertwined their bodies together.

Her face grew even further purple at the thoughts and she eventually had to look away. She approached the bed and began to remove her armour also. As she removed her breast piece she ran her finger over the scar she had from the bullet grazing, which Jacob was kind hearted enough to repair. She smiled at the thought of him patching her up like he did. It was a risky move for him, and she couldn't thank him enough for it.

Jacob slid into bed as Shay'est continued to strip. Once she was nude, she slid in beside him, this time shuffling closer to him, and placing a hand on his chest. She pulled up her knee and slid her leg over the top of his, leaning her face in toward his ear.

"Hey Jacob" she whispered.

"Mm?" he moaned a reply, urging her to continue with what she was about to say.

"I just wanted to say that Well" she gently smiled at herself "I wanted to tell you I am very thankful for you helping me. For stitching me up and looking after me, even though I could have been a threat to you. Thank you. I also wanted to say thank you for earlier You know" She trailed off and gently planted a kiss on his soft, warm cheek.

She didn't hear a reply from him, so she checked to see if he was listening. She glanced up at his face to find him asleep again. She closed her eyes, giggled and lied back down on the pillow, snuggling against him closer, her head resting over his shoulder, fitting comfortably into place, like a puzzle piece due to the shape of her head and neck.

"In time, dear" She whispered. "In time"

26. Chapter 26

26.

****Location: Numbuoy Apartments, Level 1, New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.**

>Timestamp: October 21** 2552. 21:08 hours.****

**>Unit ID: Shay'est (Female, 6'1") Sangheili, Minor Domo.
Status: Semi-conscious, asleep and dreaming.****

Shay'est stared deeply into Jacob's eyes. His eyes were a light shade of blue. It reminded her of how Earth's oceans looked upon her battalion's descent. They seemed to penetrate her down to her very core as she felt the cold tiling of the shower against her back and rear. It reminded her of the cold floor of the apartment forum where Jacob had stitched her up previously.

She felt the warm water dribbling down her chest, slithering its way between her body parts like snakes venturing down towards the floor in any which way they could whilst clinging to her scaly, now moist, warm body. She saw similar trickles of water flowing down Jacob's well-toned chest, toward his groin.

Shay'est felt the water moisten up her womanhood and help her prepare for what was to come. She closed her eyes as Jacob leaned in and planted his lips on the lower part of her neck, and slowly made his way up, kissing tenderly as he did.

She moaned softly as she felt his hand slide up her back on her right side, with the water that was running down rolling over it bouncing off the top of his hand as he raised it up her back. She felt his chest press harder against hers and the rest of his body followed.

He leaned in and raised his right hand up to her breast. He clasped her breast and squeezed gently, but it was enough to make her yelp. Not with pain, but with pleasure. She enjoyed the feeling of his touch; probably a little too much. She pressed her face against Jacob's neck and began to twitch her mandibles about, nibbling and smooching tenderly.

Jacob's body moved in closer to hers and she closed her eyes tighter. She was preparing herself for him to enter her. She felt his member against her thigh as he moved in. It was hot and soft, but at the same time fairly solid.

As he pushed himself into her she winced, but it didn't feel all that bad. It hurt a little, but felt soft, pleasurable. After the initial _ahh_ of pain it was all pleasure. Her breathing escalated and became sharper with each passing breath. With each thrust she moaned in between her breathing.

The more they went at it the warmer the tiles of the shower felt beneath her, and so did the water that ran down her body more and more tenderly. Tears had begun to slowly well in her eyes. They weren't from pain or from sadness, but were of joy and pleasure. This was one of the happiest moments she's had since she gotten together with Thel'Watamee.

As the thoughts of him arose, she shook them off, and instead flooded her mind with more thoughts of the man she was with now. He hesitated for a very brief moment, and then raised his face to be level with hers. They gazed deeply into one another's eyes and leaned in slowly. Their eyes closed slower the closer they got to one another, until their mouths met.

Kissing a human felt awkward for her; very different from kissing a Sangheili. It was strange, but at the same time very nice. She imagined it must feel awkward for him too, being used to kissing lips and now trying to clumsily fool about with her mandibles using his mouth. She enjoyed the feel of it, and couldn't help but crack a smile. He was cute when he didn't know what he was doing.

The feeling of his tongue sliding in and out of her mouth made her feel as though her returning tongue action was welcomed. She returned by opening her mouth wider, and inserted her tongue into his mouth, feeling the odd roof of his mouth against her tongue. It felt even weirder when she felt his teeth roll across the surface of her tongue as she tilted her head to the right and he tilted to his right. Human teeth were a _lot_ less sharp than Sangheili teeth. They were almost fang-like on Sangheili, and with humans, they were smooth and almost slimy feeling.

She felt Jacob's penis begin to throb inside of her as he thrust. She knew what he was building up to and didn't care. She was really rather enjoying this. She felt his limbs begin to shudder, and she wrapped her right leg around the back of him. She knew he wanted to pull out at the last moment, but in Sangheili culture this was seen as quite disrespectful toward the female, and she didn't want to see him in that light.

She held him tighter and began to thrust back, faster and faster. They began to moan together more and more in unison, until finally, Jacob's body clenched and he wrapped his head over her shoulder. His body shivered in irregular bursts as he began to jet his semen inside of her. She closed her eyes and held him close, tenderly kissing his neck.

Being of different species, she wasn't sure whether this would cause her to fall pregnant to him or not, but she could not care less. She felt more and more in love with the man she had in her arms at this moment, and didn't care whether they had a child or not.

"Shay'estâ€|" Jacob whispered.

"What is it?" She whispered back, slightly moaning still.

"Shay'est, heyâ€|"

"What?" She asked with a giggle, thinking he was playing a game with her.

"You awake?"

Her eyes shot open and her eyes began to adjust. She was dreaming. Surely enough, what had happened in her head had really happened in the shower the day before, but it had just now been only a dream. She blinked and looked over to Jacob, who was sitting over her, smiling cheekily.

"What is it, Jacob?" She asked, closing one eye, now suddenly feeling tired.

"Well, you were moaning in your sleep, so I thought you may have been having a nightmareâ€|" he snickered "But then you began to whisper '_Oh, yes! Yes!_'_" he teased, in the most feminine voice he could muster.

Shay'est felt her face burn with blush. Surely he did not realize that she had been dreaming about _him_.

"Iâ€| I umâ€|" She muttered, unable to prevent her face from growing purpler the more she thought about how silly she must have looked to him.

Jacob chuckled and leaned down toward her, planting a tender kiss on her forehead. After retracting his head slightly from the kiss, he whispered "Good morning, sweet." With a smile strewn across his blushing face.

Shay'est smiled. She didn't know men this sweet had existed somewhere in the galaxy. "Good morning, Jacob." She replied, rolling over and

feeling the warmth of the two of them that had been stored up inside the blankets that had covered them the night before, and breathing in his scent.

"I heard what you said last night by the way" Jacob whispered as he leant over her again, as she was now facing away from him. Her face went further purple as he planted another tender kiss on her cheek "And you're welcome."

Shay'est closed her eyes and sighed. "Thank you"

27. Chapter 27

27.

****Location: Numbuo Apartments, Level 1, New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.**

>Timestamp: October 22*nd**** 2552. 08:22 hours.****

**>Unit ID: Shay'est (Female, 6'1") Sangheili, Minor Domo.
Status: Functioning.****

After the pair had gotten out of bed and dressed, they moved out into the open area, Jacob first, closely followed by Shay'est. To their surprise, they were met by Jacob's comrade, David, the captain of his team. Shay'est quickly examined the man that was in charge of her Jacob's squad, and the one who was militarily ranked as far superior to him. He seemed very similar to Jacob, a similar body type and sandy, blonde hair.

Her train of thought was quickly cut short by Jacob and David quickly sharing a hug. Her eyes widened as she tried to understand what was happening. Surely Jacob was not gay? No, the night before had proven the fact that he was not. What was going on?

"I'm so glad you made it, mate." Jacob muttered.

"Haha, me too bud. Me too." David smiled, patting his squad mate on the back.

As the duo released each other, David looked up to see Shay'est. They stared at one another for a while before David finally broke their shared gaze, and diverted his attention to Jacob. "Care to explain, mate?" He chuckled.

"Oh, right..." He said, turning around to see Shay'est, who once again pulled off her almost now trademarked head tilt and smile. "Well, we'd better sit down" he said, gesturing to the couch.

David laughed at their set up they had created. "Good to see you boys have made yourselves nice and comfortable at home." He said, plopping himself in the middle of the couch.

The boys sat one on either side of him, while Shay'est stood awkwardly beside Jacob. He looked up at her, smiled and patted his thigh, signalling her to join them by sitting on his lap. She blushed, smiled and nodded before gently sitting across his thighs, her legs criss-crossing across his, and resting her head on his

chest, facing the other men.

"Soâ€|" David smiled "Good to see you've found a woman that _isn't_ bat-shit insane." He chuckled.

Shay'est felt Jacob's chest flinch. He was not prepared for David to be so understanding and so easily on their side about the topic.

"Soâ€| You're not gonna yell at me or try and kill her?" Jacob stammered, jokingly. On the inside he was overjoyed. Shay'est could feel Jacob's heart pounding away with joy in his chest. She smiled.

"Nah mate, who do you think I am, your nutcase girlfriend?" he chuckled, but suddenly stopped "Oh, does she know?" he suddenly became serious "Because if she found outâ€| She would be mighty pissedâ€|"

"Yeah, I reckonâ€|" Jacob replied, looking down at Shay'est, who's expression had now changed from happy to nervous in mere seconds "She kinda worked it outâ€| But when we ran into her we weren't really in a relationship or anythingâ€| Since she barged off, we've kind of uhâ€|" he said, tenderly rubbing her back with his fingertips, making her smile and blush again. "progressedâ€|"

"Riiightâ€|" David said with a wink. "So is it much different from humans?" he leant forward, suddenly very interested. David was really a lot about the sex in a relationship, more so than the relationship itself, in fact.

"Oh, come off it perv." Jacob chuckled, now also blushing.

Shay'est's face was burning hot with blush at this point. She had thought about looking away to hide it, but it was already too late, and this new person's kind nature kind of made her feel more at ease in his presence. He seemed more calm and relaxed. David seemed like a friendly person that she could trust.

"Well," he finally said, leaning further towards her and outstretching his right hand. "I'm David. Pleasure to meet you?" he changed the tone of his statement to more of a question, requesting her name with the question.

"Shay'est. Pleased to meet you also." She shook his hand, her hand easily fitting his inside of it.

"Oh my, she can speak too. And proper English, with good manners. Already a step up from your previous girl, ey?" David joked, as he shook her hand.

Jacob smiled and rubbed his hand up and down Shay'est's right arm once she and David had ended their pleasantries, holding her closer to his chest.

A few moments passed as the three of them joined Martin in watching television, as he had been the entire time they had been chatting away. As they watched, Jacob casually explained how the pair of them had met, and what had happened since, catching David up on their

story that he had missed out on so far. David was nodding in understanding with each passing sentence, not making a sound to interrupt the story.

"So yeah, that's where we're at now!" Jacob finished, finally having caught his friend up to speed.

A few moments passed as David reviewed everything that they had revised a second time in his head, before he nodded and said "Right. Cool. Good to have you aboard, Miss Shay'est." he smiled.

She blushed and returned the smile. "Thank you. It is nice to have you as an ally, also."

Their moment of peace, however, was short-lived, as they heard movement coming from outside. Martin and David jumped to their feet, and Jacob instinctively tried to join them, but Shay'est was still on his lap. He gently patted her on the thigh, signalling for her to get up so that he could too.

She hopped off his lap, and they gathered their weapons, prepared to face whatever was waiting on the street for them. A terrifying sensation of fear shot up Jacob's spine with a tingle, as he made the realization that what could be awaiting them was his insane now-ex-girlfriend.

Shay'est noticed Jacob's nervousness, and gave him a nudge. He quickly looked at her, and she winked at him. "I have your back, Jacob." She whispered.

He smiled at her, and she could tell that what she said had eased some tension. They slowly made their way down the stairs until they reached the street.

The weather outside was drizzly, but the sun was peering through the clouds. Judging by the position the sun was in, Jacob could tell it was about 11am. Give-or-take.

The group rounded the corner to find a Sangheili, with 3 grunt minors around him, making their way through the street. The group hid behind the safety of the wall, but Shay'est did not.

"Hey! What are you doing?" Jacob whispered "Do you want to be seen?"

His words clearly didn't get through to her, as she took a step forwards, lowering her guard. "Thel'Watamee?" she asked "Is that you?"

****Hey readers!****

****How's it going?**

>I know I haven't updated in a while! How long's it been? Bout 2-3 months? Yikes! Anyway, I've finally finished my exams! :D Now we can have more uploads, more often! :D

****However, I won't be uploading all the time, as I also have a schedule to keep up with for my Youtube account.****

****As always, remember to review! :)****

28. Chapter 28

28.**

>Location: New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.
Timestamp:
October 22****nd**** 2552. 11:06 hours.**
>Unit ID: Shay'est (Female, 6'1") Sangheili, Minor
Domo.
Status: Functioning.**

She could feel her hearts pounding in her chest. How was he still alive? He survived the betrayal of the brutes too? But howâ€¦ Had he chosen to join them perhaps?

As the thought entered Shay'est's mind, she jumped into a crouched, battle ready position. She was ready for any outcome, good or bad. Should she have to kill him, she would.

The elite's head turned toward her and his eyes shot wide open. "Shay'estâ€¦" he murmured "Iâ€¦ How didâ€¦" He stammered. He seemed to have difficulty comprehending the fact that she was still alive. "How did you survive?"

She huffed at him. "How do you think I survived? I am a good soldier; that is how. I also made some unexpected allies." She said, nodding her head back toward the others behind the building that were covering her, but not taking her eyes off of the other elite, ensuring he did not raise his weapon toward her. She kept her weapon aimed at him however.

Thel'Watamee's pose shifted also, so that he was prepared for her to shoot at him. "So," he asked, toughening himself up by crouching slightly, in a similar pose to the stance Shay'est was in "you have shifted alliance to that of the humansâ€¦ A betrayal just as bad as the brutes. Explain yourself!" He roared, getting ready to use his body as a weapon and attack her.

Jacob stepped out from behind cover when he saw the potential threat. He walked over to back Shay'est up, despite his squad mates silently yelling at him with loudened whispers. He didn't care. He saw the unknown elite show signs of aggression toward his companion. He would _not_ allow this.

Shay'est was surprised, almost thrown off by Jacob suddenly appearing from her left hand side and stepping between Thel'Watamee and herself. She was equally as stunned to hear Jacob say "Watch yourself, big guy. You so much as think about going for her, you're gonna have to deal with me, first." He growled, as threateningly as possible. She was impressed. This human was not as big as Thel'Watamee, but still did a good, brave job of standing his ground.

There was a suspenseful silence, similar to that of the stand-offs between cowboys in western movies. This silence however was broken by David yelling from the background. "Woo! Go Jacob! You show him who's boss!"

Martin bopped David on the head as he walked past him. "Come on dude, what kind of support is that. Let's go help him out. He can't use cheers as bullets, you know." He joked.

"Yeah, yeah. I just think it's good for his character to do this on his own." He chuckled back sarcastically. He had every intention of helping out. He just wanted to watch for the theatre of the situation.

"Har-har, very funny. Now come on." Martin sighed in a slight sing-song voice. "Besides, he _really _doesn't need this for his egoâ€|"

"Ooh, good point." David laughed back, as he too stood to his feet and walked out to support his team.

With his friends approaching from behind, Jacob informed the elite of what kind of trouble he was in. "I am Corporal Jacob Matthews, Orbital Drop Shock Trooper, 7th Shock Troopers Battalion. These are my squad mates. I strongly advise you not to fuck with us."

"_Ooh-Rah!_" Chanted his two comrades from behind him in unison.

The opposing elite was edgy now. His body visibly drooped as he heard the words 'Orbital Drop Shock Trooper' leave Jacob's mouth. He now knew what he was up against, and realized there was a very low possibility of him defeating them in combat; even with his Unggoy team. Once he recognized his tactical defeat, he scowled and glared at Shay'est. Once he felt he had regained what remained of his bravery, he questioned her.

"How dare you side with the humans! How many of our kind have they killed? And yet you cast aside your oath to our Covenant and join them so easily? You cannot be called a soldier!" He yelled furiously across to them.

The groups were only a good 10 metres apart, and if they opened fire on one another, there would easily be at least one casualty on either side. This was however unwise for the opposing elite, as that one casualty had a high possibility of being him.

Jacob chuckled at Thel'Watamee's ranting. "She could easily kick your ass, that's for sure."

Thel'Watamee's eyes widened with rage. He was clearly not impressed with Jacob's 'joke'. He crouched down, preparing himself for attack. Jacob blinked and raised his eyebrows. "Really, dude? You wanna do this? 'Cos I'm more than happy to go if you are." He grinned, crouching himself down in an intimidating pose, preparing to run at the elite, pulling out his trusty knife that had served him so well so far.

Shay'est was deeply worried. Both for Jacob and for Thel'Watamee. Sure, she had her differences with him in the past. Big differences. She didn't want him to be _killed_ however. And Jacob too, as Thel'Watamee was one of the greatest elite combat veterans in Shay'est's wing. They would be very evenly matched, and she definitely didn't want Jacob hurt; or worse.

"You dare to challenge a Sangheili elite in close combat? You are making a grave mistake, human." Thel'Watamee growled, almost insulted by the notion.

Jacob said nothing, but stayed ready. Moments of silence passed before finally Shay'est spoke. "Jacob, please. Do not do this." She whimpered out of concern.

"It's okay. He's not getting near you." He said, glancing back to her with a smile. He quickly turned back toward Thel'Watamee with a grin. "Your move, ugly."

The grunts raised their weapons, but before they were able to even aim at the humans, David and Martin put bullets in the Unggoy's heads. They were ready for that move, as it was shown to them in training many times. Thel'Watamee growled in frustration.

"Come on, you baby." He egged the elite on "Your move. Or are you going to surrender?" he said in an antagonizing voice.

The elite roared and took out his standard issue short energy blade, like the one Shay'est had. "This is your day to die, human, not mine!" he roared in a rage, as he began to sprint for Jacob.

The prepared marine tightened his grip on his blade. "If you say soâ€|" he replied, moving forward toward the enemy, away from the group.

"_Jacob!_" Shay'est screamed, and took a step forward, but was stopped as David gripped her shoulder with his left hand and put his right arm around her stomach. She quickly looked back at him and frantically pleaded for him to help, but he stood with a firm poker face.

"This is his fight; not ours. He chose this. We can only watch." David sternly said.

"He's right. Sorry, mate. We've got his back if things get too hairy. Don't worry though; Shadow knows what he's doing." Martin reassured her.

She looked back toward the fight that was about to commence as the two met in the middle of the street, half way between where the group was standing and where the now corpses of grunts were lying. "He had better know what he is doingâ€|" She whispered, worryingly "Jacobâ€|"

****Hey readers!****

****Hope you enjoyed the chapter!**

>Just a quick note: For those who ask in the reviews "When is the next chapter" or "Update! Update now plz!", I appreciate that you're eager to read the next chapter, and are excitedly ready to review it, but please, I do need time to write these out as well as I can. I also have a lot of other things going on, and can't magically fart out a chapter of brilliance so easily.

>I don't mind you commenting that, its just that you may not get what you are asking for, and will probably get ignored. I don't mind the review counter going up though, so if you really do have a 'review' you would like to post, please do so, as I DO read ALL messages I get.

>Every one. For better or worse.**

****Oh, and one more thing, I've got no problem with it, but people ask if they can put their characters in the story or help out with writing it, but I do not need help writing it, and already have some well developed characters in mind, so I may not give your characters a priority role. I might mention them in the future as background characters however, so if you DO have a character you'd like to have an appearance, please drop me a PM and I 'MIGHT' do so. :)****

****Phew, this is a big note section ^^; oh well, hope you've enjoyed and I look forward to reading your reviews!****

****Until next time guys!****

29. Chapter 29

29.

****Location: New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.
>Timestamp: October 22**nd**** 2552. 11:15 hours.****

>Unit ID: Corporal Jacob Matthews (Male, 25, 5'11"), Orbital Drop Shock Trooper, 7th**** Shock Troopers Battalion.**

>Status: Functioning.

The two seasoned warriors engaged in combat, Jacob watching his enemy's movements, reading them like a book, and seeing Thel'Watamee's moves coming before he could perform them. Jacob relaxed himself, dodging the enemy's slashes and stabs fluidly, his body moving like a mass of water, controlled by a delicate ballerina. His display of acrobatic swiftness did nothing but further frustrate his opponent.

Thel'Watamee leapt back as Jacob swung his knife at the side of his face, dodging Jacob's attack, and only narrowly avoiding the blade making contact with one of his mandibles. The elite took a breath and focused on his enemy, eliminating any distractions from the scenery around him.

The elite was shocked to see Jacob raise his left hand, his index finger outstretched. "One sec, mate; just gonna flick on my music. Need some good jams playing for when I kick your ass." He chuckled, fiddling with the Heads Up Display inside of his helmet by pressing the buttons on the left side, whilst still holding his knife in his right hand.

The elite grunted and slashed his sword at the air beside him, before running at Jacob once again for a second wave of attacks. Jacob was still pressing buttons on his helmet, but saw the elite coming behind his partially transparent HUD. He tensed his arms and twisted about his waist, thrusting the weight of his torso to his left, leaning and avoiding the elite's burning plasma weapon with ease.

The elite spun to his left, and threw a kick toward Jacob's stomach, but as the foot came closer and closer to Jacob's abdomen, he left the ground with his feet and hopped back in the direction the leg was travelling, also dodging the kick.

Jacob heard his music begin to play through his helmet. It helped him

fight in close combat, as he could match his movements to a rhythm, making his movements more fluid but also faster at the same time. Some old rock came blasting out of the earmuff sound receptor parts inside of his helmet, blaring out Mystery Man by Freestate, an old band his cousin had taught him about.

The elite grimaced as Jacob looked up and dropped his visor, so that it was see-through and his enemy could see his evil smile. The elite did his best to disregard this and attacked yet again, stepping at him with a swordsman's grace, each step also carrying multiple sword based attacks. However, it seemed as though the human was able to track his movements with ease, and almost insult his movements with his bodily manipulations that resulted in his dodges.

"You know what your problem is?" Jacob asked, nearly shouting over the top of his music "You telegraph your moves too easily. I can see your muscles tense and move in certain ways, which makes it very easy to predict your next attack, and where it's coming from." He said between his enemy's various slashes and chops.

As the elite swung a mighty slash with his right arm, in which his weapon was held, Jacob rolled under it, "And before you know it," he said as he did so, "You're dead." He finished, as he ended up crouching down behind the elite. The Sangheili swordsman quickly spun to see Jacob crouched way down beneath him, almost against the road; but his view was only short, as Jacob launched himself up off the road, planting his helmet firmly at the base of the elite's mandibles, sending him reeling backward, and dropping his guard for a split second.

This split second was more than enough for Jacob. He tossed his knife into the air, gripping it in the opposite way he had it before, the blade now pointing toward his elbow, and lunged toward the elite. He was inches away, butâ€¦

He froze. He couldn't reach his enemy suddenly. The elite was in arm's reach, but his arm could not move. He looked to the right to see what was wrong, and saw a hand on his shoulder. Not a human hand, but a Sangheili hand.

"Enough." Shay'est said, tears welling in her eyes. "Stop this now."

Jacob was shocked. He glanced back at his opponent to see if he was going to make another move whilst Jacob's guard was lowered, but was just as shocked to see he also stood down, lowering his weapon by his side and extinguishing its bright energy, leaving him equipped with a mere silver hilt.

"What are you doing?" Both males asked the female Sangheili in unison. They were both shocked that she had stepped in like that.

"There is no reason to kill each other. If we all team up together we can survive a lot better than if we were to kill each other." She turned toward Jacob who now turned off his music at the touch of a button "Please. I beg of you." She said to him, her eyes welling further with tears.

It was almost enough to make him cry along with herâ€¦

>Almost.<p>

After a sigh, Jacob said "Fine. For you, and nothing else." He looked toward the elite, who seemed most enraged at her.

"How dare you meddle in the affairs of two warriors in combat? Have you no pride? You-"

"Hey." Jacob said, silencing the elite "She saved your sorry ass, so I'd be thanking her if I were you." He warned sternly, but was still panting from the intense fight.

There was a tense moment of staring between the elite and the ODS^T marine before the elite scoffed and waved a hand at them. "Fine. I will play along with your little game, woman. But if I feel the need to, I will eliminate these humans."

She gave a sigh of relief "Thank goodness. And if it does come to that, Thel'Watamee, I am sure you will be 'eliminated' just as easily." She chuckled.

He huffed back at her, before returning to his grunts, to take down their information to report the casualties back to his commanders upon his return. He was not happy that he had to make an allegiance with humans.

Jacob turned back to Shay'est, concerned. "Are you sure this is a good idea?" he inquired, placing a hand on her shoulder.

She looked back at him "I do not know, but it is certainly better than killing each other, is it not?"

Jacob turned back to catch a glimpse of the elite glaring at him, but swiftly turned his head back to his grunts when he caught the eye of the ODS^T. "We'll seeâ€|"

30. Chapter 30

30.

****Location:** Numbuoy Apartments, Level 1, New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.

>Timestamp: October 22****nd****** 2552. 11:30 hours.**

>Unit ID: Corporal Jacob Matthews (Male, 25, 5'11"), Orbital Drop Shock Trooper, 7****th****** Shock Troopers Battalion.

>Status: Functioning.

The rain outside was starting to come down again. As the group had made their way inside a few minutes ago, it was only sprinkling and spitting down, but now it was pouring. It was cold, and everyone was gathered inside around the pot of cooking lunch, which was sitting atop the napalm fireplace. Noodles again.

The group was making conversation silently, getting to know one another, but Thel'Watamee was left out. This was of his own accord however, as Shay'est tried time and time again to make him talk with

the others in an attempt to form trust with them.

After a while, she glanced to her right, to see Jacob staring at the fire beneath the cooking noodles. It only just occurred to her that he hadn't spoken once during the entire time they had been talking. She watched his face to search for clues as to what he could possibly be thinking about, but he was blank. His eyes were dark and his face showed no sign of any kind of emotion whatsoever.

She gently placed her hand on his bicep and whispered to him, hoping to bring him back. "Hey, Jacob?"

He didn't show a lot of emotion, but did blink once. She was relieved he was still alive, but she was sure he was to begin with. He made a noise; a grunt, sounding like an 'mm?'. She understood that he was in deep thought, but was still asking what she wanted.

"What is wrong?" She asked, placing her right hand on his back, and rubbing it tenderly in a circular motion, whilst still holding his left arm with her left hand. His expression didn't change in the slightest. He remained drained of emotion, drowning in thought.

"What if?" He murmured "What if command doesn't come for us?"

The group fell silent. The entire room felt like it shuddered with the thought. Martin and David stared grimly at Jacob. They were just as afraid as he was about that fact, though they kept it contained.

"What if they don't find us? What if we're left here to die?" He finished, now with a slightly more elevated voice.

"Jacob?" Shay'est said, concerned "I am sure they will not let ODST marines die, and besides, we have food and water-"

"Yes, for _now,_ but how long will _that _last? What will we do when we run out? Huh?" He stood as he began to lose his temper, his voice rising with every word.

There was an awkward silence as Shay'est sat startled by Jacob's anger. She hadn't seen him like this before, and didn't like this side of him. The silence was broken by Thel'Watamee making a wise crack.

"I vote that we eat the small one." He chuckled, glancing at Martin.

Jacob glared at the elite. He was on the tipping point of his rage, and didn't want wise cracks. This had happened before.

"Woah, woah, calm down buddy, I'm sure we'll be just fine." David said, gripping his friend's shoulder. "Besides, we've been training for this sort of stuff our whole lives! We'll be alright." He said, in a cool, calm and collected voice. Some of his soothing tone must have rubbed off onto Jacob as he had calmed down a little now.

>There you go!

>"And hey, you're scaring the girl." He whispered, nudging Jacob's arm a little bit.<p>

Jacob suddenly blinked, almost like snapping out of a heavy daydream, and glanced down toward Shay'est. She was trembling slightly, a little bit of fear was seeping through; her face was grimacing and she was about ready to burst into tears.

He lowered himself down to her level, placing his hands on her shoulders. "Hey," he whispered, as soothingly as he could "I'm sorry. I just got scared, that's all."

She closed her eyes and sighed, wrapping her arms around him. "That is okay. Just watch out for that in the future." She pulled back, looking him in the eyes "You are scary when you are mad."

Jacob could feel his face burn slightly and couldn't help but warp his mouth into the shape of a smile. "Don't worry. I won't do that to you again." He said, bringing her back in to an embrace, "I promise."

Shay'est, this humanâ€|

She jumped slightly, almost startled at the sound. She spun around to face Thel'Watamee, shock filling her face. She had not heard her native language for a few days now, so hearing Thel'Watamee speak to her with it was a minor shock to her system. She also had not intended for him to find out about Jacob and her getting close. At least, not so soon.

"If there is something you wish to speak to me about," Shay'est said firmly "please do so in such a way so the others can understand also."

Jacob looked at her, surprised. What did he say? Was it about Jacob? Or the others?

Iâ€| Would really rather notâ€| He replied nervously, almost as shocked as Jacob was.

And why not? She replied in Sangheili, deciding to indulge him.

Well, I do not have a good knowledge of the human dialectâ€| He replied, trying to hide his blush *And I do not know how to say what I wish to say in English.* he finished, glancing up at her nervously, rubbing the back of his neck with his left hand.

She glanced over at Jacob, and sighed. Once she turned back toward Thel'Watamee, she asked him to continue.

Very well. I wish to ask ifâ€| You and the human are in a relationship. He said, sternly and seriously.

She blushed, heavily. She didn't know entirely what to say. She didn't know whether it was considered a 'relationship' per say, but at the same time did not want to upset anyone. She wanted them all to get along. If they were to team together then they could surely cooperate and stay together safely.

Iâ€| She struggled to find the right words, *I erâ€|* she stammered, clumsily fumbling with what she would say next. *It is

only a weak connection. A fling and nothing more.*

The moment the words left her mouth, her chest wrenched. She knew it was not true. She felt very strongly for Jacob, but did not want to tell that to Thel'Watamee. What would he say?

Well, he finally said, calling her train of thought to an abrupt halt *That is a relief. If you were with a human, I doubt the Covenant would be at all pleased.*

Hey readers!

Just a quick note, all the * asterisks * are meant to be signifying that they are speaking in Sangheili, but you are clever people so I'm sure you've worked that out by the time you're reading this.

Sorry I haven't posted in a while! I've been doing a lot of other stuff and haven't had a lot of time on my hands, but I am still writing, so don't worry.

**Also, I haven't received any artwork submissions yet, so if you'd like to, hurry and get them in! This story is in need of some awesome cover art! PM me if you would like to participate! :D

>

Next chapter will be out soon, so be sure to keep a look out!

**I DO read every single review that gets written by the way, so don't be afraid to post them! :) I love to read some constructive feedback from you guys!

>As always, I look forward to reading your reviews!

** - Nick (Videodude) **

31. Chapter 31

31.

**Location: New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.

>Timestamp: October 22***nd**** 2552. 21:45 hours.**

>Unit ID: Shay'est (Female, 6'1") Sangheili, Minor Domo.
Status: Functioning, suffering from mild exhaustion.**

Shay'est huffed as she slumped into a position that was comfortable for her. She was lying on her left side, facing the left side of the bed, with Jacob lying behind her, about ready to fall asleep himself. She was tossing and turning for the past 15 minutes or so, and had a lot on her mind.

She hadn't even thought about what would happen should she have to return home. If the battle here was over and they survived, what would become of her? She would be an outcast. Thrown into an abyss of loneliness, her honour stripped away. Her name would mean nothing anymore. Her kin would be outraged.

She swallowed the pain that was developing in her throat from the fear and rolled over, coming face to face with Jacob. Her eyes widened as she took in his features close up.

"Having trouble sleeping?" he gently whispered. She felt his hand slide up her thigh, stopping at her hip. Her eyelids slowly came together, but didn't shut quite yet.

"Just thinkingâ€|" She didn't want to tell him what was on her mind. It might make him feel uneasy.

"About what?" he asked, pulling her closer to his chest. He was very warm. The warmth from his chest against her scaly flesh warmed her up too. She tucked her arms in to receive as much warmth as she possibly could from him.

"Justâ€| Stuff." She gently moaned. She regretted telling him she was even thinking about anything, as now she felt guilty for keeping it from him. She was however very comfortable up close to him and taking in his body heat. She let her hand gently rest on his chest, snuggling her head into his shoulder.

"Someone's awfully affectionate tonightâ€|" Jacob chuckled quietly.

Shay'est shot up. "R-really? I am sorry! I did not mean to come on too strong or anything like thatâ€| Iâ€|" her train of thought was slowly cut off; her voice quietening as Jacob pulled her in close to him again, pressing a finger against his lips with his free hand.

"Shh, it's okay. Just get some rest." He said, holding her tightly against his chest.

Her eyes gently shut and her energy began to leave her. His warm body clutched her tightly, his gently rolling rocking her gently to sleep.

**Location: New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.
>Timestamp: October 22*** 2552. 21:47 hours.**

>Unit ID: Sergeant Martin Hamming, (Male, 26, 5'10"), Orbital Drop Shock Trooper, 7*** Shock Troopers Battalion.

>Status: Functioning.

As Martin dug into his food by the campfire, he kept a very close eye on Thel'Watamee. He didn't fully trust him, and was very uneasy about the decision to allow him into the team so carelessly. David was also a little on-edge around the elite, but knew he could handle him should things suddenly escalate.

Jacob and Shay'est had gone to bed earlier so that in the morning they could leave early to search for Curtis "Romeo" Stevens, the team's sniper. Once the team was together they could take affirmative action on what to do next.

After a few moments, Thel'Watamee decided to speak. This caught the ODS'T's off guard, as they had expected things between them to be

awkward and silent, but they were most welcoming of conversation. Unfortunately though, the conversation was about to get awkward, due to the question he asked.

"So, humans." He said "You are ODST troopers, correct?"

The boys looked at each other, but then glanced back at him, each nodding and saying "Er, yeah. What of it?"

"Well," he said, adjusting his sitting posture so that his leg didn't fall asleep on him "how many of my kind have you defeated in battle? 3? 4?" He began to throw random estimates at them based on their stature. "Maybe 5 or 6 for you?" he said, pointing at David.

"16." David said sternly. "I've killed 16 of your kind in battle."

Thel'Watamee's eyes widened. "16" his voice shakily repeated what the marine had said as he tried to come to grips with the number. "And you?" he turned to Martin.

"Me? Um Well I've not had as much experience as David and I haven't really kept count So" He rolled his head back in thought for a few moments before finishing his reply "I dunno, like 10 or so?"

Thel'Watamee was stunned. He was a good fighter, but these two had defeated 10 and 16 of his kind in combat. Thel'Watamee had only ever defeated 5 humans in combat, and they were only low ranking marines. He was almost frightened by the two men he was sitting near after he had learned of how deadly they really were. Thel'Watamee had heard many tales of ODST marines in battle, but this was unreal.

"Don't worry," David said, trying to ease the elite's mind. As he spoke, Thel'Watamee snapped his head back toward David "we won't harm you unless you're an immediate threat. At the moment you're an ally. Like it or not." He grinned.

"Well That does ease my mind a little." The Sangheili stuttered, looking down at his feet. "Knowing you see me as an ally I mean, not that you've killed so many of my kind in combat."

The boys chuckled. "How many of us have you killed?" Martin asked out of curiosity.

"Not as many as you. You two are seasoned veterans. I am only a mere domo." He replied "But to put a figure on it, I have defeated 5 humans."

"They put up a fight?" David asked. The boys were now leaning forward in curiosity. They had never really spoken with a member of the Covenant like this, and now they were intrigued.

"Some most certainly did. Others not so much." He replied with as little detail as he could, so as not to anger or offend the two of them.

"Oh come on, it's okay dude, you can tell us the details." David said "We can handle it. Go on, how'd it go down? How many missions have you been on? Do you call them missions? You know, tours of

duty?"

Thel'Watamee was stunned. He did not want to give information away that may affect the war negatively for the Covenant. "Well," he thought about his next words and chose them carefully "we call them 'Operations' to translate it loosely, but I've been on a few."

The boys looked at each other in amazement, and encouraged him to go on. He obliged, trying to keep them from killing him as long as possible, even though they had little to no intention of doing so by this point. For the next few hours, the trio shared war stories and funny tales they have witnessed during their time in the military. After which, the two marines went to bed, and directed the elite to his room.

Thel'Watamee was very thankful that they were so trusting to him, and promised not to kill them in their sleep. The two didn't take his promise too seriously but he seemed very sincere about it, so they thanked him.

Regardless, they did not sleep well that night.

****Hey Readers!**

>****Sorry its been so long... I've had a LOT on my plate and have had some SERIOUS writer's block lately. I'll keep trying to write as much as I can.**

>****Remember that the more you review, the more encouraged I am to write, so keep that up! :)****

****I promise to try to get as many of these out as I can, but I am also developing a Manga, which will be first written up as a story. I may post that on FictionPress if you want to read it (I use the same username on that, so I'm not that hard to find)****

****Anyway, that's all from me this time. As always, remember to review; you sexy, sexy legends! :D****

32. Chapter 32

32.

****Location: New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.**

>Timestamp: October 23**rd**** 2552. 08:22 hours.******

>Unit ID: Corporal Jacob Matthews (Male, 25, 5'11"), Orbital Drop Shock Trooper, 7**th**** Shock Troopers Battalion.****

>Status: Dragging tired ass out of bed.

Jacob groaned as he rolled over. The window had a small hole in it that he hadn't noticed before, and was letting breeze through. He pulled the sheets up over his shoulder and rolled onto his right side, where he had been lying moments ago in his blissful sleep. Shay'est had already awoken and was currently having a shower.

Jacob thought about why Curtis hadn't contacted them yet. There were many possibilities. Maybe he'd just forgotten. Hopefullyâ€|

Jacob sat up and put his face in his hands, slouching over. He felt

the covers slowly rolling down his torso as he tried to think of something to distract him from his thought process. Nothing seemed to be working though.

Shay'est stepped out of the bathroom, a towel wrapped awkwardly around her. She tried this after seeing that Courtney had done it, but she clearly hadn't done it correctly. The towel slipped, revealing her still wet body to Jacob. The pair looked at each other in silence and shock for a moment before she picked the towel back up.

"Yep, that'll do it." Jacob muttered to himself, a smile creeping out across his face.

"What was that, sorry?"

"Nothing, don't worry. Ready to go looking for Curtis?" His thoughts flashed through his mind a second time but he ignored them to the best of his ability. Jacob ran a hand through his hair and leaned back on his other arm.

"I will just put my armour on and then yes, I will be ready to retrieve your final comrade." Shay'est answered. Her face was bright purple again. Jacob was starting to grow used to her company, and was beginning to really like seeing her blush.

Jacob stretched his arms up into the air, as though he was grasping for something attached to the ceiling, he then relaxed his muscles, his arms flopping down into his lap. He rubbed his face with his palms a final time before getting out of bed and walking to the bathroom to wash his face. This practice usually helped with waking him up.

Whilst he stood in front of the mirror, Shay'est began to get changed in his peripheral vision. This caused his second brain to suggest to him to go 'help' her. He shook the thought, as he had other things on his mind that were significantly more important.

He splashed his face with water and stared at the mirror, gazing deeply into his own eyes. He reached out into his memory of the squad's evac routes. Once he had them in his head, he just had to pin which one was the one that Curtis was assigned to. Jacob thought David might know, seeing as it was him who gave them all their routes and it was his job to know.

Jacob returned to the room in which Shay'est was waiting. She had now picked up her carbine rifle and was checking it, making sure it was alright and ready to go. Jacob grabbed his armour and got ready to put it on. As he stepped into his pants, he looked up to see Shay'est removing and examining the clip in her carbine.

"Hey Shay'est, I have a question." Jacob's curiosity got the better of him.

She glanced at him, acknowledging his intrigue, indicating that he should go ahead and ask his question. She then went back to preparing her weapon.

"Well, how long have you been training with the covenant military? You really seem to know what you're doing." He made his observation

as she pulled his armour up over his torso.

"Oh, it _seems_ that way, does it?" She glanced back at him and smiled, twisting his words jokingly.

"Sorry, I didn't mean-"

"It is okay Jacob, I was only joking." She assured him, popping her clip back into the top of her rifle, and smacking it on the top to pop it into place, making an affirmative _'click'_ _sound, notifying her that it was in place. "To answer your question, I have been serving for a little over one of your Earth 'years' now." She finished, placing her Carbine rifle down on the bed, and picking up her plasma rifle and Jacob's pistol. She then thrust it into his hands, indicating that he too should check his weapons.

Jacob took the hint, and took the handgun, but now a new question had gripped his mind. "So, you're newâ€¦ Have much experience in the field?" This was not his question, but he felt like it would be better to build up to it.

"I have had an experience where my weapon _jammed_ because I had not _checked it_ before I went into _combat_â€¦" She said, looking at him and nodding toward his pistol, throwing enough hints at him to knock out an elephant.

"Alright, alright I gotchaâ€¦" he replied, pulling back the hammer and inspecting the weapon.

"And I have had a little experience, but a little for me is enough to know what I am doing." She popped the sides on the plasma rifle and observing them.

"One more questionâ€¦" Jacob said, softer, almost a murmur this time.

She set the sides of the plasma rifle back in place and looked at him, dreading the seriousness behind the question. "Yes?"

"Any regrets about your service so far?" his voice almost wavered as he spoke.

Shay'est felt the air thicken as she knew he was talking about whether she felt bad about killing humans in combat. He hadn't said that specifically, but she felt so strongly that this was the case that he may as well have added it to the question himself. "Well, I certainly regret a certain maleâ€¦" she said with a joking smile to try and ease the tension. It didn't work as well as she would have liked, and Jacob frowned, still looking sternly at her. Shay'est's lower-left mandible twitched and she stared into his eyes. She sighed and put the gun on the bed, turned and walked to Jacob.

Jacob holstered his pistol and Shay'est gently brought her hands up to his shoulders. "Look, Jacobâ€¦ You _know_ that I do not get to _choose_ who I have to fight against in combat. You know that as well as I doâ€¦" She brought him closer to her and wrapped her arms around him in a full embrace. "I do not get to choose who gets hit and who does not, I do not get to choose who lives and who dies. It is just war. That is how war is. That is how war always will beâ€¦" She let him go and stepped back to see his face. He still had the same

expression, but he had felt every word she said. "We are just the pawns that are stuck in the thick of it." She tilted her head and smiled in the cute way he liked.

"Yeah, I guess soâ€|" Jacob smiled back. "Would you have it any other way?"

She chuckled and slid her hands down his arms, then turned toward the door. "Absolutely not."

****Hey everyone!****

****Sorry it's been AAAGES since the last update, but yeahâ€|" Things have happened, as I'm sure you know if you've been reading the updates, not just the actual story.****

****My family's been over recently, so I haven't had a lot of time on my hands to write out chapters, so I've just finished this one, and I'm getting started on chapter 33 right now, just for you guys.
;)****

****Well, remember to keep reviewing, and I'll remember to keep updating. ****

33. Chapter 33

33.**

>Location: New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.
Timestamp: October 23****rd**** 2552. 08:35 hours.**
>Unit ID: Shay'est (Female, 6'1") Sangheili, Minor Domo.
Status: Functioning.**

When Shay'est closed the door behind her, she turned to meet an anxious looking Thel'Watamee face-to-face. She stopped in her tracks, then turned left and walked past him, toward the area the group always hang out in together. She turned her head back to the right to see if he was following her, and surely enough, he was there; right behind her; stepping in her footsteps.

"What do you want?" she spun around on one foot and confronted him, startling him and making him slightly jump. His expression quickly switched from surprise to a look of concern.

*I see you have adopted the humans' language as your own quite wellâ€|" he sneered, speaking in Sangheili *You must speak to him so much in it that it has become natural to use it instead of your _own_ language.*

Shay'est groaned and twisted her torso about on the spot, her feet remaining still, before flicking her body back into its upright position and commenting back with her retort *What is your problem exactly? Are you upset that we have to team up with them to survive? Or is it that you are jealous of Jacob and I?* She sharply inhaled, her eyes wide as she tried desperately to retract the last few words, but to no avail.

Thel'Watamee's left eye twitched and his lower mandibles stiffened. *It matters not. I am going to return to your room to speak to _him_.* He spun around and took long, aggressive strides back down

the hall. Shay'est felt the disgust in the last word of his sentence and was a little worried.

Whatever! Just do not start any trouble, I would _hate_ for them to have to _kill you!_ she shouted back before turning about and walking to the couch in front of the television and plopping herself down with a frustrated growl. She folded her arms and glared at her feet.

"So, uhâ€¦"

The voice came from beside her and startled her. She snapped her vision to the seat beside her and saw David sitting there, sipping at his bowl of noodles. After swallowing his mouthful, he spoke again "some disagreements with your Sangheili friend?" he gazed over at her, concernedly.

"What would make you say that?" Shay'est asked, blushing and looking back down.

"Well," he started, setting down his bowl, then sitting back upright "for starters, your tone wasn't exactly calm or friendly," David looked at her and smiled wholeheartedly "and you were just growling tooâ€¦"

Shay'est blushed further. It was considered very rude in her culture for a female to growl at a male. It was seen as disrespectful and sparked rumours and wives tales. A few moments passed as they sat in silence.

"Ready?" Jacob's voice came from behind the couch.

Shay'est stood up and turned to see Jacob standing fully equipped behind her. Behind him was Thel'Watamee, standing at his full height. He didn't have a happy look on his face, but he wasn't as furious as he was moments ago. Shay'est wondered to herself what could have happened between them in the room. "I am ready."

**Location: New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.
>Timestamp: October 23***rd**** 2552. 08:36 hours.**

>Unit ID: Corporal Jacob Matthews (Male, 25, 5'11"), Orbital Drop Shock Trooper, 7***th**** Shock Troopers Battalion.

>Status: Preparing equipment.

Jacob picked up his sub machine gun and pulled back the cock on the side of it to inspect the chamber. A knock at the door startled him. Jacob assumed that Shay'est had forgotten something, and was knocking so she didn't walk in on him doing anything embarrassing. "Come in."

The door creaked open and two heavy footsteps entered the room. "Forget something did we?" Jacob asked, teasingly. He closed his eyes, pleased with himself.

"Come again, human?" a voice that was definitely a Sangheili voice, but was much deeper than Shay'est's.

Jacob opened his eyes and shifted his gaze to Thel'Watamee. "And what

can I do for you?" he asked sarcastically, his tone far more serious than moments ago.

There was an awkward moment of silence before he answered. "Well, humanâ€¦" he started, but he was quickly stopped.

"I have a name, dude. I'd prefer if you used it. If you do, I'll start using yours. Fair?" Jacob pushed a clip into the bottom of his sub machine gun, and chopped at the cock on the side, snapping it into place, and arming the weapon.

"That does sound fair." Thel'Watamee agreed. "Well, _Jacob_â€¦" he emphasised his name "That is how I say it, correct? That is how I have heard Shay'est say it."

"Yeah, that's it. Good effort. What can I do for you Thel'Waterknee?" Jacob tried to get his name, but wasn't sure. He didn't mean to mess it up on purpose.

Thel'Watamee stared at him for a moment. "Close enough, I supposeâ€¦ I will get right to the point. I was wondering what your connection is with Shay'est."

Jacob did all he could to hide his blush, only showing it lightly. "What do you mean by that? My 'connection'?" he quoted.

"Well, I was wondering if you were mating with her or not."

There was a long pause.

"You really _are_ right to the point, aren't youâ€¦" Jacob sighed "Look, I don't want to get into whatever connection the two of _you_ share, and if I'm interfering with anything I don't care." He was as blunt as he could be. "It's not any business of yours, anyway."

"That is true," he replied, same tone, unfazed "but I am curious as to what lengths you will go to protect her should things go awry."

Jacob scoffed "Believe me buddy, she's perfectly fine in the field."

"That is not what I meant." He stated "I was talking about after all of this."

Jacob's interest peaked. What _would_ happen after all of this? Perhaps he could arrange for something back at headquarters? Seeing as she had helped him out so much, surely they would offer some sort of reward for her assistance?

"Don't worry about that. I will do everything in my power to make sure things work out in the end." He slung his SMG over his back and checked his pistol holster. After this he bent over and picked up his helmet.

"But will that be enough?" Thel'Watamee asked. "Do you really _have_ that kind of power?"

Jacob said nothing. He only put on his helmet and walked for the

door. Once he stood beside Thel'Watamee, he stopped and offered his hand out to shake it. "Hey, listenâ€¦" His tone was more relaxed and friendly now. "I know you're probably not that bad a guy, and you would be very useful on our team. Whatever happens now, do you want to at least try and get along?"

There was a few moments of hesitation before Thel'Watamee held out his hand in return. "Yes, I think this may not only be best for us," he took Jacob's hand in his, and shook once, strongly "but also for her."

Jacob nodded and walked for the door. Thel'Watamee turned and followed.

****Hi everyone!**

>I just wanted to take the time here to say thank you all for reading EME. It has been a journey writing, and I look forward to reading your reviews. If it weren't for the support from you guys, I would've hit my first block and just left this in the dust. You guys really are the ****Remember to review, and I'll remember to update :)****

****Also, remember that the competition for the cover art is still on! If you want to compete in that, then please PM me! I read all of my reviews and ALL of my PM's too :)****

****Another quick bit of information: I've started writing my own story. If you are curious to read it, then drop me a PM and I'll send it to you somehow. :) It is really fun to write, the chapters are twice as long as EME and I think you'll really enjoy it.****

****Before I go, I have a question to ask you. What do you think of the length of these chapters? Would you prefer longer chapters less frequently, or keep them this length at this rate?****
>Do let me know! :)

34. Chapter 34

34.

****Location: New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.**

>Timestamp: October 23**rd**** 2552. 08:45 hours.****

>Unit ID: Corporal Jacob Matthews (Male, 25, 5'11"), Orbital Drop Shock Trooper, 7**th**** Shock Troopers Battalion.**

>Status: Moving down stairs.

As they descended the stairs, Jacob took a peak behind him at his little 'team' that had set out to locate his out of touch comrade Curtis Stevens. Closely following him was a very focused Shay'est with a carbine rifle out, but lowered as to avoid friendly fire. This was common practice it seemed in any military unit, not just with humans; it seemed to be a pretty sensible thing to do.

Slowly moving behind her was Thel'Watamee, his plasma rifle in hand and also looking quite focused. It seemed that elites were quite focused at almost all times in combat. This was good for Jacob in this case; as if they weren't focused it could very well mean the

difference between life and death.

As they reach the bottom of the stairs, Jacob turns on the Heads Up Display on his helmet and turns to the others. "Okay," he starts, grasping their attention "we're going to head to the area his pod was headed for. We'll search around there for a while and if we can't find it, we make something up on the spot." He turned back toward the street.

"Make something up?" Thel'Watamee asked "What do you mean?"

"Well," Jacob replied, checking his corners and looking for anything in the street that could pose a threat "We decide amongst ourselves what actions to take next in finding him."

He stepped out into the street, lifting his gun and glancing up at the mini-map in his HUD. "Heading south. Let's go."

After a few minutes, they came to the end of the street, and took cover at the corner of a building. After peeking around the corner, Jacob spotted a small patrol; a jackal, two grunts and a Jiralhanae leading the pack. The brute was quite large and was built in such a way so that he appeared that he could knock over a building with a single left hook. Jacob didn't want Shay'est having a fight with that walking tank, so he took it upon himself to nominate Thel'Watamee to take on the challenge.

He turned back to whisper "There's a patrol ahead. One Kig-Yar, two grunts and one Jiralhanae. Thel, you wanna take the Brute? Or shall I?"

Shay'est, as though on cue, "Why can I not take him?"

Jacob glanced to her, patted her on the shoulder and said "Awwâ€| before returning his hand to his weapon and his glance to Thel'Watamee, and saying "Well? What's it gonna be?"

Thel'Watamee nodded and said "I will take him."

"Beautiful." Jacob smiled "I'll have the Kig-Yar." He turned to Shay'est "You can have the other two, sweetie." He chuckled.

Shay'est muttered something beneath her breath, but Jacob ignored it, and assessed how the fight was going to play out in his head, dismissing the less likely scenario every time a new one came up in his battle-hardened mind.

After about 10 or so seconds, the best scenario told him what was going to happen. He readied his SMG and gave a countdown to his allies. "3â€| 2â€| 1â€| Go." As he stood up and they moved out into the street, something went off in the distance; a large explosion roaring through the evening air. Jacob knew this was something important and wanted desperately to know what it was that blew up, but knew that it was more important to be in the moment he was in now. He knew that taking advantage of the confusion caused by the explosion was the best thing he could do.

He sprinted forward at the enemies that were frightened and gazing into the distance at the smoke cloud that was beginning to rise. He

aimed his SMG at the grunts and pulled the trigger, spraying a barrage of bullets at the little confused monsters, whilst leaping, thrusting his knife towards the Kig-Yar. The jackal saw him lunging at it, as bright blue liquid splattered across the right side of its face. It lifted its carbine rifle toward him, but only lifted it as far as to point toward where Jacob's feet were a moment ago, before its eye was ruptured by Jacob's sharp, custom tailored blade. It then dropped its gun and fell to the ground, whilst Jacob pushed it in deeper, just to be certain the thing was completely fucking dead.

He pulled his knife from the thing and spun around for the brute, but was grabbed by the titan's giant hand and lifted off the ground completely, his SMG falling out of his grip. After an instant of examining the situation, he appropriately stated "Shit." before thrusting his knife into the hand of the brute, lodging it firmly between the big sausage of a thumb and the brute's wrist. The beast angrily growled and lifted him higher into the air, preparing to slam him against the ground with enough force to completely crush his torso. This also worried him a bit.

Just as he was about to be slammed on the tarmac road, a bright blue light flashed by, followed by a hum and a loud psshhh sounding hiss. Following the noise, Jacob dropped to the floor, but not with the acceleration that would be provided by the brute's strength, but merely the normal 9.81m/s² acceleration of gravity. He collided with the ground with a thump, and looked down to find the brute's arm still attached to him, knife still lodged in its hand, and the arm severed just above the elbow.

Jacob looked up to see the brute gripping its stump of an arm and being beheaded by Thel'Watamee, who had rushed into battle behind Jacob, saving him from being crumpled beneath the strength of this monster, his energy sword carving the giant beast down to small shreds with ease. Jacob felt a little less stressed about the situation than he was a moment ago. He let his head flop back onto the road and took a moment to relax. He was no longer going to be squished like a cookie that had just been dipped in milk. This pleased him quite a bit.

"Thanks buddy," He said to Thel'Watamee "really saved my shit there."

"You are welcome, human. Remember to repay me the favour." He said, his sword fizzling to nothing and putting his hilt away.

"Yeah, no shit." He replied, still lying down with no intent of getting up in the next few minutes.

"Are you okay, Jacob?" Shay'est asked, leaning over him and looking down at him.

His only response was "Who can I thank for that fucking explosion?"

****Hi readers! How are we all?***

****Sorry it's been a while since I updated. I've had plenty of stuff going on, and I haven't even been uploading to my YouTube channel! My editing software has sort of fallen to shit on me and is proving quite frustrating to work with!***

****Anywho, hope you like it! Remember to share your thoughts and if you want more Enemy of My Enemy stuff made, like backgrounds or other pictures, I can't do it right now because my photoshop has also given up on me -.-****

****Well, keep reviewing and I'll keep writing!****

35. Chapter 35

35.

****Location: New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.**

>Timestamp: October 23rd**** 2552. 08:55 hours.****

>Unit ID: Corporal Jacob Matthews (Male, 25, 5'11"), Orbital Drop Shock Trooper, 7th**** Shock Troopers Battalion.**

>Status: Standing back up.

Jacob's legs buckled for a moment as he got up into a kneeling position, looking up to observe the large black smoke cloud in the distance. His vision of the cloud was then obscured by Thel'Watamee. The elite outstretched his hand to offer assistance for Jacob, but Jacob ignored him. He hopped back to his feet and continued looking at the large cloud.

The looming smoke cloud was rising from where the ONI Sword base had previously been standing. Something big had gone down and Jacob wanted to know what, but now was not the time. Right now he was more concerned about finding Curtis.

Jacob turned back toward where they were headed and said "Let's keep moving."

The pair of Sangheili followed him like the rest of his squad would follow David into combat. He was slowly beginning to find more trust for Thel'Watamee, and he felt that the trusting feeling was mutual. He wasn't trusting enough to act on his feeling however. Only more time with Thel'Watamee would tell if he were truly trustworthy.

After a few more minutes, the group of 3 unlikely soldiers was now growing very near to the drop pod landing site. Now about 50m away, the site being just around the corner, Jacob began to grow anxious. His thoughts of doubt about Curtis' safety he was having earlier were beginning to return from the recesses of his mind, and he didn't like it.

What if he's dead?

Shut up.

What if he's been taken by the covvies?

SHUT UP!

A bright purple strip flared across his peripheral vision, over his left shoulder. The loud hiss from the shot left a humming sound in

Jacob's ear. "Sniper fire!" he called out to the others, only a few feet behind him. As Jacob leapt into cover behind the rubble of the corner building, he looked back to check on the others.

As the two Sangheili joined him, he noticed that the shot from the beam rifle had grazed past Thel'Watamee's helmet, leaving a burn mark in the side of it, and taking a decent portion of it away from the helmet. Not the first time someone's had that close a call with Kig-Yar Rangers. After observing Thel'Watamee's seemingly unfazed face, Jacob came to the conclusion that the elite did not give a damn.

After learning that the Sangheili was not a known giver of fucks, Jacob asked him to see where the fire is coming from. Thel'Watamee nodded, raised his weapon, and held it out in the open, waving it around a bit. After a shot tore past with another loud hiss, he retracted the weapon, his shields depleted and a new graze on his forearm.

"South building, 5th floor." He bluntly stated, before cracking his neck and readying himself in a crouching position for combat.

There was now more than just the sniper firing at them. Jacob could also make out the sound of brute spikers firing out their ruthless ammunition, and the spikes from said weapons slamming into the corner of the building and the rubble they were taking refuge behind.

"Right, there are roughlyâ€¦" Jacob counted in his head, estimating based on the amount of fire, and the rate at which the sound of the shots were being fired. "4 enemies, one being the sniper in the building." He turned to Shay'est "How good of a sharpshooter are you again?"

Shay'est raised her carbine and huffed. "A better one than Thel'Watamee, that is for sure." She scoffed.

Thel'Watamee muttered something in Sangheili, and crankily leaned against the wall so the others could talk easier whilst he had a sulk.

"Three points is still all I needed to beat you." Shay'est teased, evidently making fun of something Thel'Watamee had just said.

"Alright, alright, now's not the time!" Jacob snapped "We'll take the piss out of each other later, right now we need to work out how to take these guys down. Shay'est, think you can take the sniper out, whilst we go for the brutes?" Jacob pulled out his pistol with his left hand, holding his SMG in his right.

Shay'est nodded and the plan was set in stone. Jacob gave a countdown and they sprung out from behind cover, guns blazing. The two men ran out first, and Shay'est jumped out a second later, so that the sniper had been distracted by the others. She lifted her carbine, and took a shot at the sniper, clipping his shoulder and shifting the weight in his torso back, causing him to miss his shot and send his beam rifle spinning off the side of the crumbling, burned out building.

Whilst this happened, the others ran at the brute patrol, consisting

of one chieftain and three regular brutes. Thel'Watamee pulled out his plasma grenade and lobbed it at the chest of the chieftain, whilst running at the other one. The grenade would distract the chieftain and take down his shields, giving Thel'Watamee enough time to deal with one of the other brutes.

Jacob began firing his SMG at one of the brutes, whilst blindly firing his pistol in the general direction of the chieftain's head. One of his shots must have sunken into the Jiralhanae's skull, because he went down like a sack of bricks. Jacob continued to empty his clip into the other brute, whilst the beast tried to bring its arms up to cover its face. His last bullet took down the brute's shields, he dropped the SMG and ran for the brute. Jacob leapt into the air, pulling his knife out and gripping it with the blade facing down.

Thel'Watamee simultaneously pulled out his sword and took a swing at the other brute, taking down its shields. As he began to take another swing, Shay'est fired a carbine shot that landed in the left eye of the brute, causing him to fall backward and slam onto the tarmac beside his chieftain.

Whilst Thel'Watamee growled in frustration, Jacob thrust his knife into the top of the Jiralhanae's helmet, penetrating through to its brain. The beast dropped its lower jaw as its eyes rolled back into its skull, falling to its knees. Jacob tore his knife from the brute's head and it flopped forward onto the floor, joining its comrades in death.

After putting his knife away and picking up his SMG, he turned back toward the ODST drop pod that awaited them. The covenant had beaten him to it, which worried him. The fact that the enemies which were there were still alive worried him more.

Jacob began to jog toward the drop pod, the front of which was open. The glass on the door was smashed and the door was hanging from a power cable, about 4 feet above them. The screens inside of the pod were smashed and cracked, joints and electrics were sparking or on fire, as was most of the scenery around the crashed pod.

Jacob's heart sank as he made out the figure of an ODST marine, slouching in the harness of the drop pod, his head hanging and his arms dangling down, motionless. Jacob began to sprint, and once again dropped his SMG. "Curtis!" he shouted "Curtis we're here!" he screamed, his voice cracking under emotion with his last couple of words.

He gripped Curtis' helmet and raised it so it faced him. The visor had a crack reaching from the top right side down to the centre. Jacob gripped his shoulders and shook him a little "Hey buddy, wake up, we're here!" he felt his eyes begin to burn and his throat ache.

"Jacobâ€¦" Shay'est approached him, reaching out to rest her hand on his shoulder, but he pulled his shoulder away and took off his helmet, tossing it to the ground.

"No! No, he can't die!" he cried "We had a bet! You can't back down now, you asshole! You still owe me a round of drinks! â€¦ You assholeâ€¦" Jacob slowly fell to his knees, his head resting against

his fallen friend's limp leg.

Shay'est crouched down behind him, wrapping her arms around his torso. "There is nothing you can do for him now. I am sorry for your loss, but we cannot stay here. There will surely be another patrol coming soonâ€¦" she felt Jacob shift his weight and begin to stand, so she gently let him go and stood up.

Jacob kept his head low and picked up his helmet. He then walked back toward where they had approached the pod from, retracing his footsteps, and picked up his SMG. "Let's go." He said silently, almost a whisper.

Thel'Watamee kept his gaze glued to Jacob, watching him as he walked past. Thel'Watamee had experienced loss like Jacob's and knew the pain of it. He understood how Jacob felt.

****Hey guys!****

****Sorry it's been a while since I last posted, I've just been a little drained by my friend's accident, and had my exams all this week. I could barely find any time for myself, let alone to sit down and write. In apology for the wait, I've written an extra-long chapter for you!****

****On top of that, I've also come down with a bad cold over the last couple of days, so I'll just be taking it easy at home for a while. Maybe take the weekend off work, we'll see.****

****Anyway, hope you enjoyed the chapter! I just had a very fun game of halo 4 with Solid G3 Legend (I believe that was your GT, sorry if I got it wrong! :)), and I appreciate that very much. Thank you for the fun!****

****Remember to review and I'll remember to write!**

>Cheers!

36. Chapter 36

36.

****Location: New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.
>Timestamp: October 23***rd**** 2552. 09:23 hours.****

>Unit ID: Corporal Jacob Matthews (Male, 25, 5'11"), Orbital Drop Shock Trooper, 7*th**** Shock Troopers Battalion.**

>Status: Moving up stairs.

The walk back to the hideout was a long one. The whole way back Jacob and the others didn't say a word, Jacob out of grief, Shay'est out of fear of further upsetting Jacob, and Thel'Watamee because, well he was Thel'Watamee.

Walking up the steps back into the apartment building, Jacob stopped in his tracks. Shay'est and Thel'Watamee stopped behind him. "Jacob?" Shay'est asked "Are you alright?" She reached out and gently placed her hand on his shoulder, like before; only this time he didn't pull

away.

"I know there was nothing I could have done." Jacob said, his voice now only slightly more quiet than normal "His injuries were from a ODS pod crash landing, not from the brutes. When they found him, he was already dead." There was a pause. "We learned all about those sorts of injuries in training. That's how I know it's what killed him."

The others remained silent. Shay'est stepped closer so she could place her other hand on Jacob's other shoulder. She then brought her head around next to his and whispered "I am sorry." She turned him around and wrapped her arms around him, embracing him in a hug. "We will do everything we can to ensure that everyone else gets out of here alive." She hugged him tighter and he rested his head on her shoulder.

Jacob held her for a moment, before Thel'Watamee cleared his throat in an awkward way. Jacob then pulled back gently from the hug, keeping his hands on her waist. "Thank you. And when this is all over, I'll do everything I can to make sure you two stay alive too." Jacob looked over to Thel'Watamee and smiled "And I mean both of you."

Thel'Watamee nodded and Jacob let go of Shay'est. They proceeded up the steps to the others, who awaited them in the living quarters. When David and Martin spotted them, they walked over to meet them half way.

"Hey!" Martin said "Did you see that explosion?"

"Yeah," Jacob said, holding back the ache in his throat, thinking about how he's going to explain Curtis to the others without losing it. "You know what caused it?"

"Well, I don't know who caused it, but I know it was our explosives. Human stuff; covenant detonation would have caused a different explosion." Martin said, before he observed the group. He must have taken notice of the fact that Curtis wasn't amongst them, because Jacob noticed his expression droop and become a grim frown.

"Where's Curtis?" David asked, his voice serious and his facial expression much the same.

Jacob gathered the words together in his mind, and opened his mouth to speak, but nothing came out. The pain in his throat grew, and the salty tears began to well in his eyes. Jacob closed his mouth and slowly shook his head, looking down.

There was a moment's pause. David broke the silence by saying "I see." Before giving Jacob a pat on the shoulder. "It's alright pal." He tried comforting him "Did you get his tags?"

Jacob's shoulders flinched as he realized he had forgotten to collect his fallen ally's dog tags, which would be presented at Curtis' funeral. Jacob looked up with a horrified expression. "Iâ€|" was all he managed to say before interrupted by Thel'Watamee.

"It is alright." He said, his voice much louder and dominant than the

ODST marines' voices "I collected them before we left the site." He said, holding out the chain, with two silver tags attached. "They looked of some identifying importance, so I thought I should bring them back for you."

Thel'Watamee placed the tags in David's hands and stepped back to where he was standing a moment ago.

"Thank you!" David and Jacob both said in unison.

Jacob took a moment to look at Shay'est and Thel'Watamee before something hit him like a punch. "Wait," he said suddenly "I haven't seen any of you guys around. No Sangheili, I mean!" he took a moment to think before asking "Why are there a heap of brutes around, but none of you lot?"

Without skipping a beat, Thel'Watamee decided to answer his question "There was a brute uprising within the covenant. The leader of the Jiralhanae, a brute named Tartarus has taken control of the covenant and ordered a culling of our species within the Covenant." He finished, as emotionless as always.

Both Shay'est and the rest of the group looked at him, astounded. "How the hell did you know that?" David asked "I thought communications were out for you guys too."

Thel'Watamee shrugged "It came through the intercommunication system before it cut out."

"Why the hell have you not told us this earlier?!" Jacob yelled. "It would have been pretty nice to know!"

Thel'Watamee shrugged again "It did not come up in conversation, so I thought it irrelevant." His voice was slightly higher pitched than normal, defending himself.

There was a second's pause before Shay'est finally spoke "Is this true?"

Thel'Watamee looked at her and nodded, confirming that their military had betrayed them. "It is true. We are just as alone in this as the others here are."

Shay'est looked down, shocked at hearing the information and her mind still processing it and what it meant for them.

"Does that mean that your species is going to be at war with the brutes?" David asked.

"I do not know." Thel'Watamee asked. "It is a possibility. We are not being killed off completely from what I can tell, only those within the Covenant military. This means our home planet should be relatively safe from the brute uprising." There was a pause. "Hopefully!"

Jacob stepped in front of him "I told you that I'm going to do everything I can to make sure you two stay alive." Thel'Watamee looked eyes with him "I'm going to stick by that. When this is over I'll discuss things with my commanding officers and see if I can try to pull strings to join forces with you against the brutes." He took

a moment to think about his statement "If your species will allow that."

Thel'Watamee nodded and replied "I will also attempt to communicate with my leaders and we will do everything we can to attempt to order some sort of alliance between you humans and our Sangheili kind against the brutes."

Jacob turned back toward Martin. "You said it was a human explosive that took down the ONI Sword base?"

Martin nodded. "Yeah, that's right."

Jacob's voice had returned to normal earlier, and now he held a serious tone. "Then that's our next objective. We're going to find out who caused that and see if we can meet up with them. If they were able to coordinate something like that, they have a plan, and maybe a way out of here." Jacob turned back toward the two Sangheili. "What do you two think? Like the idea of having a few more allies to help out?"

"The more, the merrier." Shay'est said "Is that how your expression goes?" she blushed, unsure of her knowledge of the human language.

Jacob nodded "Yeah, that's it." He smiled. "What about you, David?" he turned back toward his Captain. "You're in charge, what's the go?"

David took a moment to process Jacob's suggestion and plan out a way to get there. After doing the math, he nodded and said "Sounds good. Martin, let's start packing up and getting ready to move. We'll have a quick noodle meal before we take off, that should keep us going for when we get to the Sword base and find out what went down."

Martin nodded and the team spread out across the apartment, gathering up bits and pieces of their setup that are essential to take with them. This consisted of their gear and other basic stuff that could be transported easily.

Jacob spotted David standing by the window, gazing down upon the street, his vision fixated at a particular vehicle that seemed to be intact. A small van that had remained together through the slip space blast.

"Any idea how we're going to get that thing going?" Jacob asked, also seeing the van. "We don't have a key."

David smiled before replying "Don't worry. I grew up in New Jersey. I know how to get it going."

****Hey guys!****

****Here's another chapter for you! I've finished my exams now (as said in the previous chapter) so I'll be able to find more time to write now! ****

****I've also got a few ideas coming together in my head, so I'll have to replay Halo 2 and ODST, do a little more research. Things are going to get good.****

****Unfortunately, I'm still sick, but I've taken the weekend off of work to get better. This means a lot more time to write, so expect a couple of fairly frequent chapters coming out in the next week or so! Also, keep an eye out for familiar faces.****

****Well, I'm off! As always, remember to keep reviewing and I'll keep writing!****

****Toodles!****

37. Chapter 37

37.

****Location: UNSC Recruit Training HQ cafeteria, New Mombasa Military base, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.**

>Timestamp: November 18th** 2547. 11:32 hours.****

**>Unit ID: Corporal Jacob Matthews (Male, 22, 5'11"), UNSC recruit.
Status: Functioning, Eating lunch.****

"Who's that over there?" Curtis asked, standing beside the squad's table and pointing at the one man, sitting alone at a table. Almost every other table was taken by a unit, who all sat together. Curtis was with his squad in the 7th shock battalion.

"That's him," replied David, leaning against the edge of their table beside him, "That's the new guy."

"Oh really?" he smirked "He doesn't seem all that special." Curtis scoffed at the idea that the man could be joining them. The man had brown hair, trimmed around the edges, with a longer fringe left a little more uncut.

"I wouldn't count on that." David said, taking a sip of his leftover drink from lunch "he scored pretty high on all the tests, and his results show he's really outstanding."

"_pffft,_" Curtis waved a hand at David "Outstanding my ass. I'm gonna go and&e| Give him a greeting." An mischievous smile stretched out across his face.

David remained silent as he observed his teammate saunter over to the seemingly unsuspecting fresh meat. Courtney leant back from her seat and also watched. "Don't you think you should stop him?"

There was a moment's hesitation before David replied "You know what, part of me wants to, but the rest of me says 'no no no, wait&e| let's just see how this plays out&e|'" he giggled.

Curtis linked his hands behind his back and leant down above the shoulder of the sitting marine. "Hey buddy," he said, diabolically "whatcha' eatin' there?"

The man remained silent. Curtis was a little upset his taunting wasn't working. "Hey, I'm _talkin'_ to you, faggot!"

"Oh I'm _sorry_, " the man said without skipping a beat, obviously

more than annoyed "I'm not as fluent in _asshole_ as I clearly should be, mind speaking up again?" he didn't stand or even turn to look at him.

Curtis lost his temper easily and something snapped in his mind. He wound back a punch, and let it go, aiming directly at the man's head. Moments before it made contact, the man swiftly, and with one fluid motion, rolled his head and shoulders to the right, gripped his food tray, swung it around and smashed it against the side of Curtis' head, sending food everywhere, and Curtis to the floor.

The marine examined his now twisted and warped plate, tossed it to the ground beside Curtis, and walked back to the canteen to get some more food as David and Courtney walked over chuckling. David crouched down and patted Curtis on the back. "You still in there buddy?"

Curtis was out cold. His body wasn't prepared for the strike to the head from the metal tray, and he was gone as a result.

As the marine returned, he stepped over Curtis and said "You know, you really shouldn't be such an asshole, it's bad for your health."

David stood up, his height matching the marine who KO'd Curtis. He extended his hand. "Don't mind him, he's a cheeky little upstart. I presume you're Corporal Jacob Matthews?"

He cocked an eyebrow and met David's hand with his. "Yeah, how'd you know that?"

"I'm your new CO." he replied with a smile.

Without a second's hesitation, Jacob snapped to attention, his hand slipping out of the handshake and rocketing to his forehead, saluting. "Sir I apologise for my behaviour sir!" he belted out.

"Relax," he said, putting his hands up in a surrendering position "Think of it as a test to see how you'd react."

Jacob lowered his hand to his side again. "Was it really?"

"No, Curtis is just a dickhead."

"Ah. Alright then." He said, getting a feel for how casual David keeps things in his unit. Jacob took a moment to glance down at his mangled new teammate. He didn't look in good shape. "I guess I hit him a little harder than I thought."

David laughed, "You should see the kind of stuff ladies keep in their handbags these days. He's been hit with much worse things whilst he's been out 'flirting' as he likes to call it."

"What do you like to call it?"

"Getting rejected and bashed by girls."

"Hm." Jacob crouched down much like David did before. "Pleasure to meet you, Romeo."

David looked at Courtney quickly, and she returned his shocked stare. "Finally a callsign. We've been trying to decide on one for him for days!"

Jacob chuckled and stood back up. "So where are we staying?" Jacob asked, realized he was still holding his new food tray, and placed it on the table where he was sitting moments ago before he was rudely interrupted.

"Delta wing. Block E." David replied, pointing behind him over his shoulder with his thumb. "You can join us when you're ready, there's a spare bunk for you."

Jacob nodded and smiled, then looked at Curtis another time. "He's not gonna try and kill me in my sleep, is he?" he pointed at his out-cold ally.

"Nah, he will probably congratulate you on landing a decent hit on him or something like that. He tries to play off his failures as successes like he's testing you to improve you." David shook his head, still smiling about the whole situation. "Idiotâ€|"

The people at other tables who had been staring, befuddled this whole time, returned to their meals. A higher ranking commanding officer approached from the doorway to the cafeteria.

David placed a hand on Jacob's shoulder. "Don't worry, I'll take care of this. Why don't you go grab your stuff and set up at your bunk. Gunny here will show you where to go." He pointed a finger at Gunnery Sergeant Courtney, who waved at him.

"Thank you." Jacob said. One off word from this guy, and Jacob's career in the UNSC could be history, but he chose to protect him. Jacob found great comfort in that.

"Go on, off you go. I've probably got paperwork to fill out." The Captain said, waving the two of them off, shooing them toward the other entrance to the cafeteria.

Jacob and Courtney started walking slowly toward the entrance, but picked up the pace a little when they heard the Commander yell "What the hell happened here?!"

"Relax, Griggs! He just slipped on some food and went face first into his tray! That's all!" David said, jokingly, his hands in a surrender position again. He glanced to the door he sent the others to, and watched Jacob, examining him for a moment.

"Will the security footage back that up?" The Commander boomed.

"Nope. But we were testing a new recruit for future knowledge of how he operates." He continued to watch Jacob, evidently not giving all that much of a toss of the Commander's presence. "I believe it went quite well."

****Hey guys!****

****I've been super busy lately. I may have finished TAFE for this**

semester, but since Far Cry 3 came out, I've been doing a lot of recording. I'm going to be putting out DAILY videos for it, so that means a LOT of recording. Plus I'm also juggling other commitments.**

This chapter was meant for a day or two ago, but I'm uploading a video, so I have a few moments to write this :)

**Consider this chapter the end of season 1 of EME ;) Season 2 will continue from next chapter.

>I'm 'seasonalizing' (that's a new word, Â© me.) them for a possible future project. I'll release a vote-like thingy about that later. All you need to know for now is, it could mean pretty pictures.

As always, keep reviewing and I'll keep writing!

38. Chapter 38

38.

**Location: New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.

>Timestamp: October 23**rd**** 2552. 09:58 hours.**

>Unit ID: Shay'est (Female, 6'1") Sangheili, Minor Domo.
**

Shay'est's back was killing her after moving all of the equipment. Thel'Watamee, Jacob and herself had loaded up the back of the minivan with their important supplies whilst Martin stood guard and David attempted to hotwire the car. It was only a minivan, so there was not a lot of space for gear to fit in, but they made do.

After they had finished packing in the gear, shay'est stretched out, reaching for the sky in an attempt to dull the pain in her back. She then put her hands on her hips and leant back, in another less successful attempt. She could feel Jacob watching her.

"You alright?" he asked, much more concerned than Thel'Watamee, who was now joining Martin in watching the perimeter. The air had become dense and heavier since they had started and rain now began to spit down.

"Yes, I am alright, it is nothing." She replied, doing her best to act as if she felt no pain, picking her rifle up off of the ground. She then looked back to Jacob, who was smiling at her. Her face felt a familiar warm sensation.

Suddenly, Jacob's attention flicked toward the east, down the road that the back part of the van was facing. His expression became serious and focused.

"What is wrong?" Shay'est asked. Glancing down the street, but seeing nothing.

Jacob readied his SMG, setting the butt of the gun into his shoulder, and aiming down the sights. "I heard something."

Shay'est chuckled. "Something from way down there? Are you perhaps

losing your sanity?"

"_Shh!"_ Jacob hushed her, his expression remaining stern. He continued aiming down the street. "How long, Cap?" he called back to David.

"Shut up already, almost done." David called back, clearly getting frustrated with the unresponsiveness of the dingy, banged up vehicle.

"Hurry it up, we have company coming." Jacob said, continuing aiming down his sights. "Martin, Thel, get over here!" he called.

The two that were standing guard on the west side, facing up the road now ran back to aid Jacob, joining him in aiming down sights down the road.

A few tense moments passed, everyone fixated down the street, and David tinkering frantically with the car's electrics.

Jacob turned his head to Martin "Think you can help David out with that?"

Martin nodded and jogged back to the car, holstering his weapon and leaning in the passenger side to help. David was almost done, he only had to turn over the engine to get it started. Martin ran around the front and lifted the hood, to examine the engine whilst David tried the throttle.

The car revved a few times, before finally starting. "Yes, we're good!" Martin exclaimed, shutting the hood and running back to Jacob and the others, who were still fixated down the street. Jacob had since moved a few steps forward.

Shay'est stared down the street, thinking that surely there was nothing there. He could not possibly have heard something that far away. "What did you hear?"

Jacob turned his head to hush her again, but hesitated and replied "I heard a hum. Can't you hear it? I can still hear it!" he trailed off and crouched, lifting his gun to aim down his sights again.

Down the road, about 2 intersections away, a pair of Kig-Yar walked out from the side street, followed by a large midnight blue figure, hovering inches above the ground.

Jacob stood up and ran back for the car "Wraith incoming! Move! Everyone in the car now!"

The group all ran for the car, Jacob entering the passenger seat, and Martin getting in the back. Martin was squished between the two elites. David put his foot down and started to move the car up the street. The car wasn't moving very fast, however.

"What are you waiting for? Go, already!" Jacob yelled, winding down his window to look back at the enemies about a half a click down the road behind them.

"Alright, how about you try driving a fucking minivan full of people and aliens with several kilograms of equipment in the back! This

isn't a fucking hog, we're in some shit!" David shifted up a gear, still holding his foot to the floor. "Cover us!"

Thel'Watamee and Shay'est wound down their windows after observing how Jacob had done so, and lifted their rifles out the windows. Jacob sat on the window sill, resting his SMG against the roof of the car, and firing down range at the enemies.

The car had been noticed, and the Wraith was lining up a shot, as could be seen by the movement of the cannon on the top. The two Kig-Yar that were accompanying it were also joined by a brute that had previously been hidden behind the Wraith.

One of the Kig-Yar fell over, firing a shot up in the air, clearly having been hit by one of their suppressive shots. The other Kig-Yar ran back to take cover behind the left wing of the Wraith after witnessing his comrade die.

The car finally began to pick up some speed as they came close to the ramp leading to the highway, which would take them to the ONI Sword base. The Wraith then fired its first shot, sending a large plasma blast up into the air, which then arched and came back down toward them.

"Brace!" David yelled before swerving to evade the blast. The tyres on the car screeched and the weight of the vehicle shifted, almost causing Jacob to fall out of the window, had he not been holding on tightly. The Wraith's shot landed on the road as Jacob leaned in against the car, taking as much cover as he could whilst still being exposed. The blast sent pieces of the tarmac flying against the side of the car, and up into the air. It also left a scorch mark on the road.

"Hold on, we're almost safe!" David called, and then turned into the entrance ramp toward their freedom. The Wraith fired another shot, but it hadn't calculated for the ramp, so the shot collided with the wall below the side of the ramp, taking pieces out, and sending cracking up the supports and into the road around them.

The road began to collapse behind them, crumbling in on itself after the Wraith's blast had blown out its support. The car was only just able to outrun the danger, but the Wraith was not able to follow them, too big to fit up the ramp built for two small cars width.

A few tense moments passed as everyone caught their breath and began to calm down. Jacob sat back inside of the car, and wound up his window. After everyone had slowed their heart rates, and relaxed a bit, they saw what lay ahead of them was a graveyard of overturned vehicles and a few bodies of civilians that had been unlucky enough to be caught in the wrong place at the wrong time during the slip space blast.

"Soâ€|" David said "How's my driving?"

"What?!" Jacob yelled back to him. This startled everyone, but then they all laughed. The blast that came too close to Jacob had left his ears ringing, and he was unable to hear properly. David shook his head and continued slowly up the road, weaving slowly between the cars, and also being careful to avoid the corpses, careful not to damage any of the bodies that could later be identified and sent back

to relatives for burial.

****Hey everyone!****

****Oh yeah baby, we're back ;)**

>Sorry I've been on hiatus for so long. I've had a lot on my plate and have been planning out how this season's going to go. I can't just jump into it and start writing. I had to think about how it was going to go, what was going to happen. Otherwise I would get stuck repeatedly and not know where to go with things.

****Anywho, here's the next chapter for EME, the explosive start to the second season. Let me know what you think in the reviews! I can't wait to read them! I'd also like to thank everyone who has been here through all of this. The story honestly would never have made it past the first couple of chapters if it weren't for all of you, so I thank you all for everything.****

****As always, keep reviewing and I'll keep writing! See you next chapter everyone! :)****

39. Chapter 39

39.

****Location: New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.**

>Timestamp: October 23rd**** 2552. 10:15 hours.****

>Unit ID: Corporal Jacob Matthews (Male, 25, 5'11"), Orbital Drop Shock Trooper, 7th**** Shock Troopers Battalion.****

Bodies and debris littered the highway, both human and covenant alike. There were bodies and gibbed pieces of civilians sitting in various places on the asphalt road, along with marines, elites and grunts. There was even the shell of a hunter lying on the side of the street, after most of the bright orange worms had wriggled away and lost union with one another, venturing off to die. Along with the bodies scattered around the road were large pieces of vehicles. Mongoose pieces, the wings and shells of plating from ghosts, pieces of warthog assault vehicles; the bridge was a warzone.

Whatever happened here was a big mess. The bridge acted as a funnelling area for enemies to squeeze through a long, tight space whilst anyone at either end mowed down whatever lied in the middle. Had there been enough time to collect dog tags from the fallen marines then Jacob would have been honoured to do so, but there was no time for that. After that wraith had been on their tail minutes ago there was no time to stop and pay respects. It also brought a question to mind.

"Hey Shay'estâ€| Or Thel, whoever." He gained their attention "Do you guys take anything from the corpses of fallen allies to bring back to their kin?" He turned around to observe them and see what answers they might have, but what he saw was something he did not expect.

"I do not understand what you meanâ€|" Thel'Watamee answered "Do you perhaps refer to scalping an enemy you defeat in combat? This is a common occurrence, and it is how we Sangheili gain prestige and a

chance to increase our rank after a tour of duty."

The colour from Martin's face drained as he sat between the two hulking aliens. He didn't seem to like that idea all that much.

"Not quite what I was talking about, but that's interesting to know," Jacob said, rubbing the top of his head, running his fingers through his black hair. "What I meant was something different. When our warriors fall, we all wear a necklace made of steel," he reached down into his top and pulled out his dog tags, pulling the chain tight with his index finger, but letting the tags dangle at his fingertip. "These are called dog tags. The mark of us 'dogs of the military' as it were. We wear these so that when we perish in combat, we can have a squad-mate or someone else come and collect it after the battle is over, to return it to our headquarters as proof of death, and then to our kin for our funeral service." He put the tags away, but not before allowing the elites to observe them for a little while.

Shay'est had seen them before when he stripped down to his boxers to go to bed, but hadn't asked about them as there had been other things on her mind at the time. Like his body heat.

"So," he asked, shifting his shoulders to ensure that the tags settled properly back under his armoured top (nothing worse than having a disc of steel dig into your chest David were to suddenly hit the brakes to check everyone was wearing their seatbelts). "Anything like that?"

The two Sangheili looked at one another for a few moments before Thel turned back to him. "There are some Sangheili who wear markings on their armour. A unique code that they make up from the crest of their name and of their family. It normally takes the form of some insignia or symbol." Thel tapped the shape on his shoulder, which was a yellow triangle with a hole in the middle, but a small triangle pointing downwards in the hole. "This is mine. Shay'est has hers, but hers has its own story."

Jacob looked to Shay'est who pointed at the maroon mark on the centre of her chest plate. It took the shape of a small circle with a long, triangular arrow pointing downward just beneath it.

"These markings," Thel continued "are taken from the armour of our battle brothers when they fall, and returned home to their families, so that they may know of their failure in combat and honourable death. This insignia may then be passed on to our children, and the children of our children, so that they may wear our marking in combat and represent our family and show us respect on the field of battle."

The car fell silent for a few moments as everyone took in what had been said. This was interesting news and would remain in the minds of these ODST troopers for when they are next in combat with Sangheili.

"So, Shay'est." David asked. She perked her head up and caught his glance in the rear view mirror to indicate that she was listening intently. "What's this story behind your marking?"

She took a moment to prepare the words in her mind before speaking so

that she may not fumble over her words. "My marking is one that I have created on my own, not one passed down to me. My family would only have males join the Covenant Army, so I left them, and created my own insignia. This way I can join the military and still have a brand for my future children to wear should they choose the honourable path of joining the Covenant Army" she took a few moments to think about that. "If there is still a Covenant Army after all of this." She finished as she looked back down to the floor of the car.

"You left your family and started your own. That's very brave for a Sangheili, am I wrong?" David had studied Sangheili during his time as a lieutenant before he was promoted to Captain, so he knew a fair bit about Sangheili culture, but a lot of this was still news to him.

"You are correct." Thel replied. "This is one reason why Shay'est is one of the bravest female soldiers I have ever served with."

Shay'est jerked her head up and looked at Thel'Watamee. What he had said just now was a very honourable thing to say to any Sangheili and was very touching. She nodded to him and replied "Thank you. And I am honoured to have served with you, Thel'Watamee."

A moment of silence passed and David finally spoke up as they neared what looked like a giant steel wall at the end of the bridge just in front of the burning structure that is what remained of the ONI Sword base. "Well will you look at that," he said "a heartfelt moment from one of the most random group of misfits in the world."

****Hello, ladies and gentlemen!**

>I do apologise for the long, long hiatus I have been on. (what's it been, like a month or two? :o oh noes!) but I have had a lot on my plate.

****I have returned to my Advanced Diploma of Civil Engineering here in Australia and am finding less and less time for everything with my amazing new girlfriend. (WOO HOO! ;D) P.S: She's one of you reviewers! :o****

****Regardless, I will continue to try and find time where I can to keep writing. As you're reading this I am already working on the next chapter (or have already finished it). It has been through the communication with my reviewers (Shoutout to Solid G3 Legend for bringing me back out of my hidey-hole) that I have returned to writing this fun story, and am looking forward to the chapters to come!****

****Again, I apologise for the absence, but welcome back to EME! In this season you can expect a few familiar faces, along with a few interesting curveballs and twists I may throw in :)**

>I hope you enjoyed this chapter, and as always remember to keep reviewing, and I'll keep writing!

**Location: New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.
>Timestamp: October 23***rd**** 2552. 10:25 hours.**

>Unit ID: Corporal Jacob Matthews (Male, 25, 5'11"), Orbital Drop Shock Trooper, 7***th**** Shock Troopers Battalion.**

As the van pulled up and the engine rattled, the crew gazed up at the giant iron door, that had been left open just a crack, big enough for people to funnel through one at a time, opening out toward them. They knew that there was no chance of fitting the car through, so David turned the engine off. There were guard towers on either side of the door that had been abandoned. Somebody had a last stand here, and it didn't end well for them.

The crew got out of the car, one by one, and observed the door. Martin stood by the edge of the bridge and kept his eyes on the skies for banshees, as they were wide out in the open and very vulnerable. As the team approached the door, they stacked up in a breach and clear formation, David on one side of the opened giant door, and the rest of the team lined up on the other, Jacob first, followed closely by Shay'est and then Thel.

David held out his left hand and held his readied weapon with his right. Using his left hand he counted down with his pinkie, ring and middle finger, by holding them out, then one by one lowering them, 3, 2, 1.

After he hit 1, they all filed into the open door, lifting their weapons and aiming around the courtyard of the ONI Sword base, scouting for any hostiles that may be hanging around, waiting for people to show up to a death trap. The air was heavy with smoke from the flaming debris that lay around the courtyard. The team began to yell "clear" one at a time, indicating that there were no enemies in sight and they were safe to relax their guard a bit.

"Okay, people." David said, as everyone gathered around him. "Andâ€¦ Sangheili." He said, awkwardly.

"Aliens are people too." Jacob commented.

"So the deal is," he continued, ignoring Jacob. "Someone's blown the ONI Sword base sky high. And I want to know who and why."

"Why bother to come here?" Thel'Watamee asked. "Why is it any of our concern?"

"Because," David replied, taking his external, chest mounted team radio, used to contact command for orders off his chest and dangled it in front of him "The boss won't pick up the phone." He reconnected it to his chest. "We've tried contacting our superiors multiple times and we can't get through. Possibly due to static from the jump. This building has the resources to get us a stable connection."

"_Had_." Jacob added, kicking a piece of flaming rubble, sending it bouncing and rolling across the ground.

"Well, let's just try to stay positive, hey? Little miss doom 'n' gloom?" David nudged Jacob and Jacob nodded back.

"How are we looking out there Techie?" Jacob called.

"No need to yell." He replied through the radio in the helmet. "We look okay for now. Banshees are fast though. They could come out of nowhere."

"Alright then, we'd better get cracking. Anything happens let us know, okay buddy?" David said through his radio. "If things get intense really quick and we don't have time to get out to help, come join us inside."

"Copy." Techie replied, not moving an inch. He continued staring up at the orange-red sky.

The group of four approached the entrance to the compound with caution, weapons at the ready. There could be anything inside this building. When they reached the door they could not get it to open, as the blast had killed the electronics operating the doors, and sent the station into lockdown. David waved Jacob over to help pull the doors open. They gripped a door each, and pulled with all their might, creating a small gap—Big enough for probably a mouse—Or a flexible cat. They continued to pull as hard as they could but couldn't manage to get it open, but suddenly, the doors flung open and sent the boys onto their backsides.

When they looked up they saw Thel'Watamee holding the doors open with ease. David and Jacob looked at one another before David decided to comment. "Look at this tank. Not even breaking a sweat. If we have to push the car buddy, you're doing it."

Thel nodded and chuckled, but this moment was cut short as Thel was knocked back onto his backside as what seemed like a wall of green bugs came flooding out of the doorway, and flew up into the sky. These bugs were huge, about the size of people, and they seemed a bit pissed.

"Yanme'e!" Thel called from the floor, grabbing for his plasma rifle and firing up at the flock of them that blew past. The team joined him in firing on them, but most of the drones seemed intent on just flying off into the sunset and not bothering with them at all, but a few did remain, wielding plasma pistols.

A few plasma shots from one of them collided with the road beside Jacob's left leg and made a familiar sizzle sound he wasn't comfortable with hearing. He thought of his shoulder wound and a shiver shot up his spine. He certainly doesn't want to feel that again. He returned fire with his SMG on the one that was firing at him, and after a few shots hit it, it went down in a spiral pattern, almost like a plane that had had its wing blasted off.

About 5 remained and all were firing on the team. Martin came running in to help and started firing at them with his pistol, aiming for the heads, but with their unpredictable flight patterns they are quite difficult to hit, so he ended up hitting the body and limbs of the bug. However this was still enough to send another one down. The squad worked together to take down the remainder of the bugs, and immediately after the last one went down David called out to everyone to let him know who is and isn't injured.

Jacob called fine, Thel called fine, Shay'est called fine and Martin called fine. David nodded and said "Good. Then one of you can help me

get to some first aid."

Jacob ran over to David and noticed he'd taken a hit to his left knee. The plasma burn was similar to the one he had earlier but was much less intense. A plasma pistol does a much smaller amount of damage than the weapon Thel uses, which is the one his shoulder was injured by. Jacob could've taken this opportunity to make all the bad jokes in the world, but now was the time to help out. He helped his Captain inside and leaned him up against a wall. Martin remained at the door, keeping watch for Banshees or in case the bugs decided to come back in case they forgot something.

The inside of the building was thoroughly wrecked. Wires hung loosely from the roof and from the screens placed around the room. Bits and pieces were hanging and there was an elevator hanging suspended by some mere electrical wiring. Flaming rubble scattered the floors and there were pieces of the walls everywhere.

Nothing was out of the ordinary until something made a noise around the back. The team lifted their weapons and beheld the person that stood before them. An ODST trooper stood, weapon drawn and aiming down sights at them. They aimed back, not knowing what to expect from him or her, before they all slowly lowered their weapons and calmed down a bit.

David spoke first. "Captain David Remmings of the ODST 7th shock trooper battalion. And you might be?"

****Hello again!****

****I have some big plans for the series and this is where they all start to unfold. I am wondering if any of you have issues with differing from the canon. Because for me plans to work, there will be some differences from the canon story. Deal with it. I won't change too much, just minor details so certain people do get to make appearances.****

****I hope you've enjoyed reading this chapter as much as I've enjoyed writing it!****

****As always, remember to keep reviewing and I'll remember to keep writing!****

41. Chapter 41

41.

****Location: New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.
>Timestamp: October 23**rd**** 2552. 10:47 hours.****

>Unit ID: Shay'est (Female, 6'1") Sangheili, Minor Domo.

The soldier silently stood still for a further few moments before David, propped up against the wall, repeated himself.

"I say again, what is your name, soldier?"

Silence.

David began to grow frustrated and did something he hadn't done in years. "Soldier, I am a Captain of the 7th Shock Trooper battalion and I am your Commanding Officer. You will answer my question."

Without a second's more hesitation, the soldier snapped to attention and saluted. "Lance Corporal J.D., AKA: 'Rookie' sir!"

Almost shocked by the sudden response, David and the team hesitated for a moment. "Very good, now what are you doing here? Where's the rest of your unit?"

The marine chuckled. "Your guess is as good as mine, sir. Last I saw them was in the drop. Been looking for them for days. Found clues here and there but haven't found any of them yet."

"I see." David said, before inspecting his surroundings. The inside of the ONI Sword base was a wreck. It would be a miracle if any of the equipment still worked. "Well then what are you doing here?"

J.D. shrugged. "Looking for clues? I dunnoâ€¦" He looked down and kicked a piece of rubble. "What are you guys looking for?" He leaned to his right and observed Thel and Shay'est who were hanging out at the back of the group "And why are you hanging out with elites?"

David chuckled "It's a long story. Think of it as a 'we scratch their backs they scratch ours' situation."

J.D. nodded. "Alright then. Well if you need help, give me a shout, I've checked the comms room already so I'm gonna do a sweep of the rest of the building."

The group nodded. "Where's that comms room?" Jacob asked.

"Communications room is round back, to the left of that elevator." J.D. pointed toward one of the two elevators in the middle of the room. Behind the elevators the room opened up into a large balcony area.

"Alright guys," David said, stretching out his leg and making sure he can put pressure on it again by stepping forward and pushing down onto the floor with it. "We'll pair up, Thel go with Jacob, Shay'est with Martin and I'll look around this room for useful stuff. I won't be doing much moving around just yet."

The group nodded to him and began to wander over to one another, pairing up as per the Captain's instructions. Thel and Jacob walked over to the communications room to see if there was any equipment they could use to contact HQ, whilst Martin and Shay'est went to speak to the Rookie.

"So, J.D, yeah?"

The Rookie continued looking around silently but nodded.

"Where you from?" Martin asked. He seemed to have some questions

prepared to work out if the man was trustworthy. Shay'est observed silently.

"From Crisium City in Naniwa, on Luna." He said. Short and to the point, and kept observing the room.

"Ah, moon manâ€|" Martin said, nodding. "When did you enlist?"

"July 7th, 2547." He bent over and picked up a piece of shrapnel panel off the floor, stood back up, examined both sides of it, then tossed it aside. He then looked back up toward Martin. "You?"

"September 12th, 2548." Martin watched as Thel and Jacob walked into the hallway that led to the communications room. "Day after my 19th birthdayâ€|"

**Location: New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.

>Timestamp: October 23***rd**** 2552. 10:49 hours.**

>Unit ID: Corporal Jacob Matthews (Male, 25, 5'11"), Orbital Drop Shock Trooper, 7***th**** Shock Troopers Battalion.**

Now that Thel'Watamee and Jacob had some time alone, Jacob took it upon himself to inquire more about Thel's past. After they closed the door behind them, it fell off the hinge and collapsed back into the foyer they were in moments ago. Jacob turned around and continued down the hallway, jogging for a moment to catch up, as Thel'Watamee was unfazed by the mischievous door.

"So, Thel'Watameeâ€|" he said, his SMG still at the ready as there could still be some enemies hanging around and lurking behind corners. Now that he had spoken they also knew they were here. "You and Shay'estâ€| You guys uhâ€|" he searched for his next words and chose them as carefully as he could. "Close?"

"You are asking if we are or were in a relationship. Correct?" Thel replied, without looking at Jacob.

"In a more roundabout way, yes I was."

Thel'Watamee sighed and turned toward Jacob, stopping walking. Jacob did the same, turning toward Thel.

"What was between us she ended, and I believe she does not wish to continue with it."

Jacob took a moment to think about his reply. "That's a shame, dude. Better luck next time."

"Indeed. There are other females though."

"Go on?"

"Well, as a swordsman I am allowed the privilege of having my choice of any number of mates."

Becoming a Sangheili was becoming more and more appealing to Jacob by the day.

"However, I have only ever had one that I feel a proper connection with. Beyond mating."

"Shay'est." Jacob's mind pieced together almost instantly.

Thel'Watamee's silence was more than enough to answer Jacob's question. Jacob began to feel a little guilty about being with Shay'est like he has been. Especially in front of Thel.

But only a little.

"She's a good catch. Gotta make sure to hold onto girls like that." He rubbed salt into the wound a little. Just to keep the rivalry going. If things go south and he has to kill Thel in the end of all this, he doesn't want to be his friend when that happens.

"I will in the future. But there is no reason I cannot win her back now."

Interestingâ€|

"How do you plan on doing that?"

"If she and I were to survive this whole ordeal, then I am sure she would take me back after what we have been through." He clung to a shred of hope.

"Oh, you poor bastardâ€|" Jacob shook his head and tutted.

Thel'Watamee swung his right arm toward Jacob and picked him up by the throat, holding him almost a foot off of the ground. Jacob immediately went for his cousin's knife and held it just above Thel'Watamee's wrist.

"I promise you this stings when it goes in." He said as he prepared himself for yet another fight. "And this isn't the way to win her back."

Thel'Watamee thought for a moment whilst glaring at Jacob before scowling and dropping him back to his feet.

"Do not tempt me again human. It will not end well for you."

"Like you've got a chance in hellâ€|" Jacob muttered.

****Hey readers!****

****Just wanted to take this time to tell you thanks.
>Thanks for reading and following the story. Its really been fun writing so far and there is still a heap to go.
I hope you have even half as much fun reading as I do writing.****

****I recently went back and started reading the story again from the start (because I forgot how it all went :B derp) and realized its just as much fun for me to read as it is to write.****

****Anyways, remember to keep reviewing and I'll remember to keep**

writing! :)**

42. Chapter 42

42.

**Location: New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.

>Timestamp: October 23**rd**** 2552. 11:06 hours.**

>Unit ID: Shay'est (Female, 6'1") Sangheili, Minor
Domo.

The sweep of the building turned up clear for Martin and the bunch. Apart from a few corpses of marines, Sangheili and drones, there wasn't much in the way of suspicious paraphernalia lying around. There were however brute spikes from a spiker gun wedged deep into a wall. The screens around the room that normally hung from the walls were either hanging off, broken and smashed, or on the floorâ€¦ Broken and smashed.

The power was still out in the building, which is to be expected after a blast so large it blew the roof off of the place. The team wandered around in darkness, their visors being the only way of seeing. The visors in the ODST helmets scanned the environment and lit it up for the user, providing an outline of the environment so they don't walk into things and can see what they are doing in night ops.

Shay'est had a heightened sense of sight compared to the humans, so she could see in the dark just fine in this situation. She leant against a wall, observing the new person who introduced himself as the "Rookie" rummaging through rubble and bits and pieces, attempting to find a shred of evidence as to what exactly happened in the building. Humans were curious creatures to her. She had learned about them in her training but not so much about their habits and behavioural patterns. Things worked so differently with Sangheili. If a Sangheili had been detached from their unit in combat, they would in most cases be shunned and dismissed from their position, forced into a life of shame. But humans seemed to rally back together and press on. It intrigued her, and she had thought about it when she first met with Jacob, but had decided not to bring it up, to spare the embarrassment in the rare case she may be wrong.

Shay'est found herself gazing at the ground as she thought, and then observed it. The ground here was more tiled than concrete like the hotel was. This would have certainly been much less comfortable for her to lay on with Jacob sitting over her patching her up. That memory still made her face feel hot, and she felt it would stick with her forever. For the first time she questioned why she was fighting against humans, and realized some of them were not as bad as her training had led her to believe.

"Yeah what's up, dude?" David suddenly said, invoking a startled reaction in Shay'est. It seemed Jacob had contacted him through his helmet. She walked closer to try and hear what he was saying, but all she got was muffled noise. "If you think that's it then sure thing, that would help." There were a few moments wait while David listened to his response, who then looked over at Martin and said "Can you do it?"

Martin nodded back. "Aye aye, sir."

"Then hit the switch and we'll move up to the security block. See if anything's still working."

**Location: New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.
>Timestamp: October 23***rd**** 2552. 11:06 hours.**

>Unit ID: Corporal Jacob Matthews (Male, 25, 5'11"), Orbital Drop Shock Trooper, 7***th**** Shock Troopers Battalion.**

The ODST marine, accompanied by his Sangheili buddy, wandered down the hallways, weapons ready but nothing around. The Sangheili was starting to get agitated by the ODST marine's humming. He eventually gave in to his curiosity and was about to ask what the tune was, but the marine suddenly stopped, looking in to the room on his right.

Jacob stepped into the room, but kept his guard about him. He walked toward the large machine in the back of the room, with a big lever-like switch in front of it. He gazed at the large steel machine for a few moments before contacting the rest of the group on his radio. "Hey Cap, you copy?"

A few moments passed before he replied "yeah what's up, dude?"

"I've got what I think is the backup generator here. You want me to switch it on? I think the activation was jammed by the blast but there's a manual override switch here."

"If you think that's it then sure thing, that would help."

Jacob thought for a sec before forming an idea. "I think I know how we can work out what happened here. There's a security room on the third floor. If there are any screens still in one piece we can probably find the camera footage on the computers."

David asked Martin if it was possible and Martin said he could do it, so Jacob reached out and pulled the lever. The steel switch was heavy and difficult to move, possibly to prevent accidental activation when the primary generator was still already running. The switch hit the bottom of the panel with a loud bang and the generator began to hum. Jacob then dusted his hands off in a satisfied manner, and began to make his way past the elite and back down the hallway, humming his tune to himself again.

"Human, what is that song you keep humming to yourself? It is driving me crazy."

"Hm? Oh it's the ODST marine cadence."

"A marching song? Is that what you call them?"

"That's a way you could say it, yeah."

"How does it go? Tell me so I do not have only a tune in my head with no substance behind it."

"Substance? That's a big word for you." Jacob teased.

The elite glared in silence.

Jacob sighed, but then he closed his eyes and began to sing to his tune. "Helljumper, helljumper where have you been? Feet first into hell then back again! When I die please bury me deep! Fix an MA5 down by my feet!"

The Sangheili walked in silence for a few moments, contemplating the song. "You ODST marines do not feel fear of death, do you?"

"Not as much as most marines or normal people, no. Why do you ask?"

The Sangheili walked in silence for a few moments more, piecing together his next sentence. "We were taught in our training that you did. It is news to me. It is how most Sangheili feel during combat. How we are trained to feel. It is admirable, as most of us cannot develop the strength to defeat the fear of death."

Jacob nodded in agreement. "Neither can most humans. It is a difficult concept to get used to. Once you realize that you could die any day, you come to grips with it and tend to shrug it off."

"What did it for you?"

"Come again?"

"What gave you the strength? I witnessed my father's death in a duel."

Jacob tried to fight back images of his cousin's funeral; his attempts to choke back tears and the pain in his throat from crying.

"There have been many things that made me the person I am today."

* * *

><p>Hey guys!
Been a while huh? Look at that, I worked out that horizontal line thing... Only took me like what... A year...

>Anywho~<p>

We're back! Sorry its been so long between uploads. I've had heaps going on and barely time to write. Just found an opportunity to do so, so I thought I'd seize it.

>I'll keep trying to write as much as I can, but at the same time I'm kind of trying to finish the Mass Effect games...
heh...

Also, I noticed a lot of you have been contacting me to check if I'm still around and adding me on xbox live, telling me how big fans of EME you are. And its very touching, thank you... I'll accept friend requests from all of my followers and reviewers :)

>My xbox live GT by the way is Videosphere<p>

I was thinking of making a facebook page for the series, you can post fanart, I can post fanart, we can talk about the story, I think it would be good fun, please share your thoughts! Also, hit me up on

xbox live for a chat when I'm not busy and I'd be happy to have a party chat with you all and talk. :)

I think that's all I wanted to say so... Yeah :D

>As always, remember to keep reviewing and I'll keep writing!
-Nick

43. Chapter 43

****Location: New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.****

****Timestamp: October 23****rd**** 2552. 11:15 hours.****

>Unit ID: Shay'est (Female, 6'1") Sangheili, Minor Domo.

Shay'est heard singing from down the hall, and walked quickly to the door that the boys walked through earlier. This caused her to become somewhat concerned that they had lost their minds, and half expected one to come back coated in the other's blood.

She was quite relieved to find that the two walked back together, side by side and both still intact. She walked over to welcome back Jacob and asked if it was he that was singing earlier, and what it was. "Is that the marching song of your whole army?"

"Oh no, that one's just for us ODST marines. The proper UNSC one goes something likeâ€|" Jacob cleared his throat, as did the other boys.

"When I die please bury me deep! An MA5 down by my feet!"

"Don't cry for me, don't shed a tear!" David joined in "Just pack my box with PT gear!"

"'Cuz one early morning 'bout zero-five!" Martin also contributed his voice, making the whole remainder of their squad together singing the marching song "The ground will rumble there'll be lightning in the sky! Don't you worry, don't come undone!"

"It's just my ghost on a PT run!" Even the rookie joined in for the last line.

A few moments of silence passed as the group of marines looked at each other and all sighed with nostalgia. Trying to remember the cadence was the hardest part of their military career. One could argue even more gruelling than the drills they did.

The team made their way up a stair case that lead to a short hallway, the floor tiles broken and destroyed, the walls falling apart, much like the rest of the building. But one door in the hall was still left shut, untouched by the battle scarring the building had faced. Conveniently enough, this was the security office they were seeking.

Jacob turned to David and Shay'est stopped in her tracks. "Sir, would you like the pleasure of unlocking this door for us?" he asked, bowing forward and pointing with his left arm toward the door, much like welcoming someone into a room.

"It would be my pleasure." David replied, holstering his weapon. He took a step back, followed by a quick step forward, and putting as much force as he could into a kick, placed beside the door handle, blasting the door open. After his kick however, David groaned and recoiled down, gripping his damaged knee, which it seemed he had just done more damage to.

Jacob laughed. "Good ol' Danger Dave the Tank, always thinking things through." He scoffed sarcastically. David chuckled through his pain and Jacob turned away, walking into the room, shaking his head. Jacob was followed by Martin and Thel. Shay'est lifted David's arm over hers, and acted as his crutch, helping him into the room after them.

Martin quickly got to work inspecting the equipment. He tinkered with keys, assessed the monitors that were still in one piece and got to work finding the security footage from before the place went into lockdown. He began scouring the video until something happened.

The team stood around for a few minutes assessing the damage to the room. Shay'est propped David up against the wall and also looked around, close to Jacob's side. Aside from a single spiker round that had come through the window that overlooked the lobby area they were in moments before, and impaled itself into the ceiling, the room was more or less okay. Sure, there was electrical equipment everywhere from the shockwave of whatever blast took place, but it was still structurally sound.

Martin jumped back in his seat suddenly, obviously witnessing something he wasn't expecting, before exclaiming "There!" and leaping back to his keyboard, and rewinding the footage. All life in the room crowded around the screen, gathered in close together to see what happened.

The footage revealed a team of ODST marines and regular marines, holed up in the lobby where the elevators were, surrounded by brutes and drones that were moving in hard and fast. Both sides of the struggle were losing units left right and centre, but they kept on fighting. The audio was heavily distorted, but Martin stopped it and rewound it because he picked up on something. He leaned in closely to listen to the playback.

"What did they say?" Jacob asked.

"Sounded like arm the chargesâ€¦" Martin kept listening. "Then another guy said he thought they were to protect the buildingâ€¦" he continued interpreting for the video. "Then the first guy again, said he had orders to deny enemy access to all filesâ€¦"

He sat back in his chair. "Enemy started cutting through the doorsâ€¦"

They all looked closely to see how it played out, but the Rookie quickly cut off their focus. "Those are my guys." He said pointing at the screen.

"How can you tell?" Martin asked, moving his head to the right, as though he was about to turn to the rookie, but not looking away from the screen.

"I recognize them. That means there's a good chance they're still alive somewhereâ€¦ I have to go look for them." The rookie said, walking for the door.

"You can't be seriousâ€¦" Said David, still leaning up against the wall, by the door. "You're not going to hang around with us?"

"Sorry sir, but you know as well as I do that a marine never abandons his unit." Rookie replied, giving the captain a salute. "Wish you all luck sir."

"You too buddy." David returned his salute, staying leant up against the wall. "You too." He said as the marine walked away.

The rest of the group looked back at the footage. The marines were airlifted from the back by a pelican. "Well," said Martin, "Looks like we've gotten all we needed." He stood up from his chair and stretched. "Time to head off guys?"

"Looks that way." Jacob replied. "We got a new buddy, lost him, and now we're off looking for a pelican."

"Why don't we go with him? He seems alright." Martin raised his gun, and pointed it down toward the lobby, indicating they should follow the Rookie.

"Nah, he is more of a lone wolf. We'd end up slowing him down or getting in his way. He can sort himself out." Jacob replied, before walking for the door, stopping in front of David. "In this place, nobody can afford any kind of inconvenience." He said with a wink. "Unless they can manage it like a hard ass." He said, nudging David's shoulder.

Shay'est took David's arm again to help him down the stairs they climbed, but half way down the stairs, they heard a loud humming noise from the open balcony.

"Phantom inbound! They're dropping units!" Yelled Martin from ahead of the pack. "Run for the door!"

* * *

><p>We're back, baby! ;D
Hello ladies and gentlemen. Sorry for my long absence, but I've had a lot going on and have only just now found some time to sit myself down and write.

I've just finished my semester of study, and my hard as hell exams. I didn't do great but hey, I did my best and that's what matters. Anyway, I finished study and then almost as soon as it was over, I had to jump into a full weekend convention. 3 days of Supanova. That's what took up my last few days. As well as a 21st party. Every night. for the past few nights. I'm pretty exhausted.

Anyway, I got a chapter out for you as you have all been craving so badly. I hope you did enjoy it!

>Please remember to as always leave a review and I'll keep writing :)<p>

44. Chapter 44

****Location: New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.****

****Timestamp: October 23****rd**** 2552. 11:40 hours.****

>Unit ID: Corporal Jacob Matthews (Male, 25, 5'11"), Orbital Drop Shock Trooper, 7**th**** Shock Troopers Battalion.****

The enemy aircraft began its descent toward the platform, making life for the team just that much more unfortunate than it already was. The group sprinted for the door they entered through, but when they reached it, it wouldn't open. Although the power was now on, the sensor was busted. Martin jumped about in front of it, waving his arms around, but it was to no avail, as the doors remained shut.

There was an emergency opening lever to the right, about 35 feet away from the door. This lever had the power to override the system and open the door. The enemy drop ship began to leave a few brutes for them to deal with.

"Take cover! Behind whatever you can find!" David barked to the team, propping himself up against the wall, behind a large piece of equipment that had lights and switches on it, but the power in it was broken, so the lights weren't working. He began to provide some cover fire toward the general direction of the brutes for his team mates to find cover.

"We need to keep trying to get that door open!" Jacob called out. Each of them had found their separate pieces of cover, and had managed to keep the brutes back behind the wall they pinned them at with suppressive fire.

"I'll get on it!" David replied, now that his team mates were safer. He limped quickly toward the lever and pulled down on it. It was heavy and required about all of his strength he could spare, and both hands. The door opened up, but as soon as he let go to tell the others, it immediately slammed shut, without a second to spare. The lever had to be held down for the door to stay open.

"Jacob! Get your girlfriend through this door!" He yelled, as he pulled down on the lever again with all his might, opening the giant doors once again. "We don't have a lot of time!"

Jacob nodded and turned to Shay'est. "Get through the door and cover for Martin, he's next!" he pointed to the open door they entered through.

Shay'est nodded and sprinted to the door as soon as she had a chance. She just managed to get behind the door in time to take cover from enemy fire. Jacob sighed with relief, before returning fire at the brutes. He managed to take down the shields on one, and put a couple of rounds into its arm with his SMG.

"Martin, you're next! Get a move on!" Jacob yelled to his teammate, who was standing behind a wall behind him. Martin nodded and ran for the door, but not before stopping beside David, and observing him.

"What are you doing! Get going already!" David screamed, obviously struggling with the lever. Martin quickly pieced the puzzle together in his head and realized what David was doing. He nodded and ran for the door.

Shay'est provided cover fire and Martin joined him. "I'm through the door!" Martin called so Jacob knew his next move. He nodded and turned to Thel. "Provide cover for me, I'm gonna run for it, then when I'm there, I'll cover you. Got it?"

Thel nodded and Jacob sprinted for the door. Once he was behind the door, he began to shoot at the brutes, but looked at David. "What are you doing?! Get over here!" he screamed to him.

David looked up and shook his head. "I can't! The thing won't hold! You have to go! I'll hold them off as long as I can!"

"Bullshit, Captain! You're coming with us!" Jacob called back, before a spiker round hissed past his helmet and he had to crouch down to become less of a target. Thel'Watamee remained in his position, firing on the brutes, and with his plasma rifle, took the one that Jacob had wounded down. He was stalling as long as he can for them to sort themselves out.

"Corporal Jacob Matthews! You are in charge of this squad now! You are going to lead them to safety, do I make myself god damn clear!" David screamed, starting to lose his grip on the lever, his legs slipping out from under him slightly.

Thel began his push for the door while the others covered him from the remaining brute. Jacob couldn't hold back his tears. He was about to leave his captain to die. His friend to die, and there wasn't anything he could do about it.

"I said do I make myself clear Lieutenant!" David cried again.

"Lieutenant?!" Jacob screamed back, still firing.

"Consider this your promotion! It's been an honour serving with you!" David yelled as Thel'Watamee made it through and started to continue firing.

"No, David!" Jacob screamed, his voice cracking from the pain in his throat as tears streamed down his face. He reached out toward David, who released the lever, and sent the door screaming shut. His arm, which was through the door was only just saved by Shay'est pulling him back on to the floor.

The door sealed itself shut, and spiker rounds slammed against it but were unable to pierce through. Jacob screamed at the top of his lungs and tried his hardest to free himself from Shay'est's grasp. They could still hear David returning fire from the other side of the door, but they couldn't waste any more time, they had to move, or else his sacrifice was for nothing.

"What's the call, Lieutenant?" Martin asked, loudly. He was also experiencing difficulty talking as his voice was also faltering. David was a close companion of theirs for the longest time, and now

he was gone. Giving his life to save them all.

Jacob took some time to collect himself, but eventually gave the command to retreat, calling out in a wavering voice. "Get back to the car, we have to get away from here!"

The team nodded, and Shay'est released him. She apologised to him for pulling him back, but he didn't hear most of it because his heart was pounding so loudly in his ears. His vision was blurred, and he couldn't walk in a straight line. Disoriented, he plopped himself down on the passenger's seat of the car.

Thel had taken a spike to his lower back on the left side in his dash for the door, which he pulled out with a grunt, and a spurt of blood, before sitting in the back seat behind Martin. Shay'est took the seat behind Jacob. Martin put his foot down, as the car was already left running from before, and they took off down the road they came in on.

A few moments of sad silence passed as the driver dodged the debris on the road. Jacob leant his elbow on the windowsill and placed his face in his palm, trying to stay composed. He had to try and stay as strong as he could for his team. They needed him now more than ever. He decided he needed to keep them together. That is untilâ€¦|

"There is more room back here now." Thel decided to break the silence.

Jacob took only a second to unholster his pistol and jam the business end of it into Thel's face. "Listen very closely. I don't care if that was your attempt at humor or you thought it was fitting to say. I don't care. If you refer to _my friend _as room for you to sit ever again or disrespect him in any way I promise I will blow your covenant ass away. Do you understand?" he said darkly and seriously.

Thel stared back at him, his game face on.

"Do you understand?!" Jacob yelled.

"I understand." Thel replied.

Martin nudged him and Jacob turned his vision to the driver. "Put it away man. Emotions are high right now and the last thing we need is to lose someone else."

Jacob knew he wasn't referring to Thel, but to him. Jacob nodded and shakily put away his weapon, sitting back down in his seat.

* * *

><p>Hey guys!<p>

A pretty emotional one this time around, but I was in the mood to keep writing from my previous chapter. I'm about to head to bed now so, yeah.

Anyway, I hope you guys liked it! Let me know what you think in a review!

>Thanks and I look forward to reading your reviews! :)<p>

45. Chapter 45

****45.****

****Location: New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.**

>Timestamp: October 23*rd**** 2552. 11:51 hours.****

**>Unit ID: Lieutenant Jacob Matthews (Male, 25, 5'11"),
Orbital Drop Shock Trooper, 7***th**** Shock Troopers
Battalion.****

The car's shoddy suspension did nothing for the already overbearing passengers as they rocketed down the highway. Inside the vehicle was only the roaring of the tyres against the rough road beneath them and the squeaking of the shock absorbers as they bounced over debris. The air was very tense and the whole crew was feeling hostile. Their direction had been taken from them and they had to work out their own way now.

Every member of the team was looking out their respective windows, or what was left of them that hadn't been blown out by gunfire and explosions. Jacob's head reached desperately for ideas on what their next move could be. Remarkably, they didn't see the Rookie anywhere when they left, as though he had disappeared into thin air when he left the building. Jacob's train of thought was difficult to keep due to the sounds around him. There were few, but they were distracting; the squeaking, the roaring, the equipment bouncing around.

On top of it all, what was the worst was Thel'Watamee's heavy breathing. He was taking deep, raspy breaths and Jacob could think of nothing apart from it. It plucked at his brain in such a way that it made his eyebrow twitch with frustration every time his thought process was interrupted. It was infuriating.

__We can't go back to the hotel, not after the wraith scout team saw us. __**Khhhhh __We need a new place to stay. __**Khhhhh
**__Somewhere more hidden, but where we can still see most of the city and have a grip of what's going on around us.
__**Khhhhh**__

"WILL YOU SHUT UP WITH YOUR BREATHING ALREADY?!" Jacob snapped and spun around to the elites in the back seat, shouting at Thel. "I CAN'T EVEN THINK!"

"I apologize. I have sustained damage." Thel took a moment to breathe. "I am finding it difficult to breathe."

Jacob stopped his train of thought dead in its tracks and glared at the spot on Thel'Watamee's stomach where he was clutching it, his hand coated in his purple blood.

"Why didn't you say something?!" Jacob yelled, still furious, but now more concerned. He couldn't afford to lose anyone else. "If you go belly up, we lose a valuable asset! Pull over Martin!"

The car tyres screeched as the car swerved toward the side of the road to a halt. Jacob immediately got out and ran around the car to Thel's side and opened the door. "Front or back and did it go right

through?" Jacob asked as he clambered for his medkit, but then realized he had already used his on his own body repair and on Shay'est's. He turned toward Martin who had already taken out his medkit and was handing it to Jacob. He took it with a nod and returned his attention to Thel. "Well?"

"The spike had only pierced my back, it did not come out the front." Thel confirmed. "I removed it the way it entered."

"Shit, that makes things difficult." Jacob said as he leaned in to inspect Thel's wound. The bleeding injury had pierced dangerously close to where the Sangheili lungs are. There was a chance his lung was damaged. The way he pulled out the spike could have sealed his fate and his lung could be filling with blood.

Jacob looked back at Martin and took a few steps away with him while Shay'est tended to Thel, who was starting to break into a sweat. Jacob turned away from the car with Martin to have a private conversation. "It sounds like he's damaged a lung and it's starting to fill with his blood. There isn't a lot we can do apart from keep pressure and dress it up, but if it's as bad as that, I'm pretty sure there's nothing we can do for him; after some time he will drown on his blood."

Martin nodded seriously. "Then what do we do?"

"Exactly what I said. We're running low on medical supplies and we need to find ourselves an airship and get ourselves out of here. It's been days and I doubt any search and rescue teams are on their way to help us out." Jacob continued staring at the ground as he spoke. "If he dies we have to make sure we can get everyone else out of here safely. If our numbers dwindle any more, we're fucked."

Martin nodded and heard Thel cough, so he ran back to provide the medical attention Jacob recommended. Once he was done they could leave.

A crash sounded in the distance and Jacob spun to see what it was. Down the road from them, in the direction they were headed, was a ghost piloted by a grunt. Behind this ghost was a small scout group, two kig-yar and two grunts all on foot.

"Contact! Martin you keep patching him up, if he dies now we're fucked! Shay'est get out of the car and take cover behind it with me! Weapons ready!" Jacob shouted as he sprinted behind the van and crouched down, ghost plasma rounds striking the ground behind his feet as he ran. He knew the ghost was headed for him. It would make a pass and come back around. Shay'est crouched down beside Jacob, ready for orders. "Suppressive fire down on those foot units back there. I'll take down the ghost."

Jacob turned back toward the side of the car and took his knife out of his sheathe. If he was going to do this he had to time it perfectly. He listened for the ghost's approach; the electronic hum of its engine and the zing of its boosters drawing louder and closer. He knew that his window for this was barely a second. He lifted his knife, business end pointing down toward his knee and prepared himself.

The ghost drew closer and Shay'est started firing from her side at

the foot units, where she was covered from the ghost's line of sight. Jacob leaned back, ready to pounce forward, his eyes closed, listening for the engine, perfectly aligning his timing. Jacob roared as he lunged forward with his knife, spinning to the left as he swiped outward. His knife barely missed the front of the ghost's body by millimetres, and the blade tore through the piloting grunt's neck, just below his mask. As the ghost roared past and Jacob withdrew his arm as quickly as he could, the grunt's head ripped off of its body and pulled blood and a segment of its spine with it toward Jacob. The ghost lost its energy and veered into a burnt out car and exploded into a cloud of purple and grey smoke.

Jacob holstered his knife and took out his SMG. It was time for him to help Shay'est fend off the foot soldiers. "How many?" he asked to clarify that his earlier inspection was correct.

"There are three left, I have removed one of the grunts!" Shay'est replied, firing away with her carbine rifle.

Jacob turned off his safety and squeezed his trigger, sending a spray of sub machine gun fire down the road toward the covenant troops. His rounds sent up tufts of smoke and ground as they hit the road. His trail of bullets began below the feet of the units that were gaining near to cover, but as he fired the weapon's kickback corrected his error and sent the barrage of hot lead directly for the two jackals. He saw the blood of one of them begin to spurt from its legs and torso as his rounds climbed the enemy's body toward the top of its chest before it finally fell backward.

He shifted his aim toward the second kig-yar, but Shay'est had already dispatched her second grunt and was firing at the kig-yar also. The two of them riddled the enemy with rounds as a team until there was barely any of the jackal left. It fell backward, smoke rising from the holes in its body.

The two of them remained behind the car until they were sure they had dispatched all of their opponents. When they had worked out there were no more enemies of any threat to them, they returned to the side of the car to check on the others. Miraculously, Thel had taken no more damage, and the car doors Martin was hiding behind had taken all of the covenant gunfire damage. They were safe. But Thel was deteriorating rapidly.

* * *

><p>Hello my precious readers!
I've returned! Look I'm not dead! See?! :D *waves arms about*
>Although, lately I've not felt far off.<p>

I am eternally grateful for your patience with me. I am frankly amazed you are all still hanging around and I am still gaining reviewers. It feels amazing to see that.
>So for those who have stuck through my slackness, I am thankful.<p>

The reason I have not been writing lately however, is for the last couple of weeks I have had a rather bad chest infection. I haven't been able to breathe properly, haven't slept well (about 2-3 hours a night), been coughing up blood, been vomiting every day for these last few weeks and had pretty constant fevers. I went in to the

hospital today to get an x-ray to find out that I do in fact have pneumonia and that I'm borderline ready to be admitted to the hospital. I was given medications to take and they told me that my previous medications were doing nothing _;

If my condition deteriorates further, I'll be checking myself in to hospital to get the proper help I need. But we'll see how it goes.

Anyway, that's why I haven't been writing lately, and I apologize. "Had a bit of a cough, didn't feel like writing" didn't seem appropriate for me to post. So I powered through and put together this chapter for you. Hope you enjoy it! Let me know what you think in the reviews please!

I look forward to reading your reviews!

46. Chapter 46

****46.****

****Location: New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.
>Timestamp: October 23**rd**** 2552. 13:52 hours.****

**>Unit ID: Lieutenant Jacob Matthews (Male, 25, 5'11"),
Orbital Drop Shock Trooper, 7**th**** Shock Troopers
Battalion.****

The car was useless. The fire it had sustained from the covenant forces on the bridge had rendered it unable to move. The engine was shot to pieces and the wheels were melted. The blueish gray paint which had initially already been faded when they recovered the vehicle was now just gray, or however much of it hadn't been melted off by plasma fire that is.

The weather was cloudy, but not raining. This was probably the most beneficial scenario the group could find themselves in. The cloud would mean the alleyways would be much darker and they could sneak past patrols a lot easier. Given the state that Thel'Watamee was in, they needed all the breaks they could catch.

The buildings that made up the city of New Mombasa cast large shadows upon each other. They stretched up toward the sky, trying desperately to reach the clouds but falling just short. The only building that was able to grasp the clouds was the spire in the centre of the city.

About 2 hours had passed since the encounter with the scout group and the team was in a bad way. They were each carrying anything they could to help set up their next hideout, but Thel was in no condition to get into another battle. If they were unlucky enough to get attacked now, Thel would surely die, maybe more of them. Jacob had to be very careful about how they moved.

They were in a small back alley, wide just enough for them to file through behind one another. They were trying to make it closer to the spire in the central area of the city. The buildings were taller around there and they would have a better chance of survival. If they moved quietly they could sneak past patrols without alerting

them.

They needed proper medical attention for Thel. Without it he would die. Humans could not properly treat his wounds, but maybe Sangheili knew how. If they could get him back to their command, he could be properly tended to. Jacob however was beginning to wonder if he was worth the risk.

A building across the street from the opening of the alleyway was perfect for them. It was out of sight and Jacob doubted the enemy forces would check inside as it held no real strategic value. There were few entrances and it would be easy to defend. He leaned over and told this to Martin. He agreed and nodded to give the go-ahead.

They moved one by one across the street, all covering each other as they moved. Luckily there were no patrols moving past at the time, but it paid to be cautious; especially in a situation like this.

The building had at some stage been a hotel, with a small shop on the bottom floor. It was 3 storeys tall and most of the shop's stock was still around and intact. The building's top floor was completely destroyed, leaving the second level and the shop on the ground level left to use.

It had been 3 days since the drop into the city, and Jacob could not afford the luxury of being 'choosy'. His ammunition was running dangerously low, as was Martin's. Unless they find some more soon, they will be in trouble. Thel had been keeping up surprisingly well with the group considering his injury, however, Jacob anticipated he wouldn't be with them much longer.

Jacob helped Thel sit and rest against the wall. Martin and Shay'est moved upstairs to clear the top of the building, through the staircase in the back corner of the shop. Thel's breathing was still quite heavy and if he moved around too much his lungs would not hold out.

"How do we contact your command?" Jacob knelt down on one knee. "We need to get you out of here as soon as we can."

Thel'Watamee looked up and maintained eye contact with Jacob. "I will not give you the means to contact my superiors."

Jacob began to feel frustration rise in his stomach. "It's to get you medical attention, you moron. If you don't get help from your own people soon, you'll die. We don't have the means to patch you up and drain your lung properly. I give you another day. Maybe. After that you're a corpse." Jacob stood back up to his full height. "So what's it going to be?"

Thel sat in silence for a few moments. They were closer to the city centre, but they weren't close enough yet to make contact with UNSC craft that may be near enough to catch their call. "Do not tell the female that I am going to die."

"What?" Jacob wasn't sure if he simply misheard Thel or he didn't believe what he had heard.

"Do not tell Shay'est that I am going to die. I will not allow you to gain contact with my superiors. It is against our code to allow such

an action. I will die an honourable death but I will continue to ensure her survival as I do so." Thel took a few minutes to breathe. "This is my decision."

Jacob stood motionless, comprehending and thinking about what Thel had said. "You're certain then?"

Thel looked back to the reflection of Jacob's helmet visor, still breathing heavily and nodded.

"Very well. We will tell her that you're going to be okay and that we'll get you to safety, but when you check out, you check out." Jacob agreed it was a good idea to ensure they kept together but wasn't sure how it would play out in the end.

"Jacob." Thel said, lifting his right arm and tapping his fingers against the insignia on his left chest plate. "This is my family battle emblem. There are some like it but this is mine." Thel took another moment to catch his breath. Jacob felt that the line was eerily familiar, but hazarded a guess that Thel was not an avid viewer of movies from Earth. "I am requesting that you collect it from me upon my death, and ensure it makes its way back to my family after this is finished."

Jacob was stunned. This was a heavy honour that he didn't feel he was strong enough friends with Thel to carry out. It was like a squad mate asking to bring his tags back to his family. Jacob nodded and crouched back down, examining the insignia. There was a small groove at the top of the small piece the insignia sat on, to pull the piece free. It could have been no larger than a dog tag.

"If you're sure you'd entrust that duty to me, I'd be honoured to do so." Jacob agreed and placed his hand on Thel's shoulder. "However I cannot make promises in combat. If I carry the emblem and I die, I can't guarantee it makes its way back to your family. And even if I get out of here I wouldn't know how to send it, but I will try." He lifted his hand off of Thel's shoulder and gave him a pat back on the same shoulder of reassurance.

"My thanks." Thel replied, closing his eyes and resting his head back against the wall. "I never thought I would have made allies with a human."

Jacob chuckled. "You're preaching to the choir."

* * *

><p>Hey guys!<p>

Betcha thought I was dead, huh? :P

>Well I'm here! I'm still writing, but I just haven't been writing as much as I used to : sorry about that. I know I should be writing more, and I will continue to try to do so. I'll attempt to be on less of a hiatus and try to write as much as I can for you all.

I want to inform all of you, there isn't a whole lot of the story to go! We are nearing our dramatic conclusion! :O

>I'd estimate we'll go another 10-20 chapters. See how we go. I'll write as much of a rich story as I can for you all.<p>

Anyway, as always, remember to review as much as you guys can and I'll try to remember to keep writing!
>I thank you deeply for all the support this story has gained and I hope you continue to enjoy reading as much as I enjoy writing.
Thanks to you all!
>- Nick<p>

47. Chapter 47

****47.****

****Location: New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.**
>Timestamp: October 23rd**** 2552. 14:05 hours.****

**>Unit ID: Lieutenant Jacob Matthews (Male, 25, 5'11"),
Orbital Drop Shock Trooper, 7**th**** Shock Troopers
Battalion.****

The pair of Martin and Shay'est had taken their time exploring upstairs. It would be better to be absolutely certain that they were in the clear. The last thing they would want is to say that it's all clear up stairs only to have a brute with a hammer come down and cave their heads in.

That would be counterproductive.

Thel was starting to ease his breathing. Moving around so much caused him great difficulty breathing, but after he had taken a few minutes to sit and breathe he stabilized himself and was breathing more or less normally. Jacob admired his ability to pull through. For a squid-head he wasn't so bad.

Even though Jacob had been focused on the tasks at hand, he was very concerned about Shay'est. They had been quite close and intimate before but after everything that's happened they aren't so close anymore. He felt like they needed to talk. In situations that are as hard as this, a little small talk can make a world of difference.

"Would you be alright here on your own?" Jacob asked Thel, "I'm gonna go check on the others."

With Thel's nod, Jacob pivoted on his heel and moved up the stairs. Up-stairs Jacob was faced with a short hallway, with a window at the end. The hallway ran down the centre of the building, with two rooms on either side and the hallway was cut short by a windowed wall.

"Clear."

The voice called out from the end of the hallway on the right. From the last room emerged Shay'est and Martin. They came walking down the hallway toward Jacob. Jacob nodded to Martin, prompting him to stop.

"What's up?" Martin whispered to his squad leader.

"Can you go look after Mr. tough nuts down there for a bit. I need a word with this one." He nodded at Shay'est.

Martin hesitated for a moment. "Everything alright?"

"Yeah. Just need a talk. Everything's cool." He reassured, with a pat on the shoulder.

Shay'est nodded and Martin moved down stairs. The pair of them walked back to the room that she and Martin just came from. Each of the four rooms was identical and each one was a bedroom with a small bathroom attached. The walls were coated in a deep red wallpaper, and the carpeting was a reddish-brown.

Jacob sat down heavily on the bed with an exasperated sigh, and took off his helmet; revealing his sweat drenched face. Jacob was exhausted, with everything they had been through he hadn't had any time to just sit and rest. He had forgotten just how comfortable beds were.

Shay'est sat down beside him and leaned forward. "Jacob? Are you alright?"

Jacob sat for a few moments in silence. He thought about how to word his next few sentences. "I justâ€¦" He thought more.

Jacob felt a familiar pain start to well up in his throat. Similar to the pain he felt when he was a young boy, being picked on in school; like being lost as a child in a shopping mall. That feeling of helplessness that led to tears began to turn his stomach. He clenched his teeth and continued to speak through his tightened jaw.

"I'm not sure what to do." He gazed down at the floor and saw his vision blur. "I don't know what I'm doing. I'm just trying to keep us afloat but I've already lost so many of us. We're low on ammunition. I have no proper direction. Hell, I don't even know if reaching the top of the spire in the city centre will even help us gain radio connectivity. I justâ€¦" He held back a sob as hard as he could, and took a moment to recuperate. "I'm lost."

Shay'est waited a moment in silence before leaning over and resting her head on his shoulder. She slowly laid her hand on his thigh and just breathed with him. The stress he was going through slowly began to fade and fade until eventually there was only the moment they were in together.

Shay'est lifted her head and looked at him. He met her gaze. "There, now that you have calmed down a bit, I need to tell you something." She laid her head back down on his shoulder. "If you had not found me in that alley and helped me, I would have died. I believe quite firmly that I am better off as I am now, pressing on with you than dead in an alleyway." Her hand began to brush slowly and tenderly up and down his thigh. "The hardships you have been thrust into you were not prepared for. No matter how well you had been trained, I doubt you could ever be prepared well enough for what you have faced. Yet, you still have me. You still have Martin. Even Thel'Watamee is managing to pull through."

Jacob wanted to tell her he wouldn't make it, but he couldn't. He had to keep it a secret and he couldn't break Thel's trust now.

"How is he? Is he going to be okay?" she asked, the brushing on his

thigh coming to a stop.

"Yeah." Jacob replied, quick as a bullet. "Yeah, he's going to be fine. He just needs to rest as much as he can." Jacob felt her hand begin to stroke his leg again, calming him.

"That is good news." She sighed with relief. "I am glad you two have not killed one another."

Jacob chuckled. "Wellâ€¦ There were close calls here and there but we're here."

"That is right." Shay'est said, lifting her head and looking again into his eyes. "We are here. And that is because of you. You made the right calls and saved us all many times. It is because of you that we are here. You need to remember that."

Jacob felt very relieved. He had been focusing too much on what had brought them down and burdened them and not about how far they had come against unspeakable odds.

"Thanks Shay'est." Jacob rested his head on top of hers. "You really helped."

She giggled. "I employed the same method my mother used to calm me down as a child." She leant her face over and whispered in his ear. "It looks as though it still works like a charm." She pecked him on the cheek and smiled. Just seeing her smile like that again warmed him inside.

"Shay'est, I-"

"Hey guys! We need you down here!"

Jacob was cut off by his teammate's call. Martin yelled from downstairs for their help. Jacob quickly grabbed the SMG off the bed beside him and ran as fast as he could for the stairs. Shay'est followed close behind.

"What's wrong?" Jacob called, jogging down the stairs. He didn't hear any gunfire, and by Martin's call, he knew there weren't any enemies inside the store or he would have given his position away.

"Someone's coming. You better come quick."

Oh, Christ. Jacob thought to himself, _when can I catch a break?_

"What is it now?" He asked, walking up behind Martin, who was standing beside the still sitting Thel, clutching his plasma rifle for dear life. "A brute chieftain? Another wraith? We'll work it out." Jacob felt a lot more pumped after his talk with Shay'est. He reminded himself to do that more often.

"Your ex-girlfriend." Martin grimly replied, his voice wavering.

Jacob stood in silence for a few moments.

"God help us all." He whispered.

* * *

><p>Hey everyone!<p>

Just finished writing this one, fresh off the presses.

A big thanks to Solid G3 Legend for being an awesome fan and helping me through my writer's block. Cheers for the cool ideas and the advice. Wish you all the best with your college work and thanks for all the help. We definitely have to chat more :D

Anyway guys, let me know what you think in your reviews and I can't wait to read from you all. :)

48. Chapter 48

****48.****

****Location: New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.**

>Timestamp: October 23rd**** 2552. 14:20 hours.****

**>Unit ID: Lieutenant Jacob Matthews (Male, 25, 5'11"),
Orbital Drop Shock Trooper, 7**th**** Shock Troopers
Battalion.****

Courtney's silhouette moved through the street, coming from the alley the group had previously emerged from about 20 minutes ago. Her silhouette was bulky but it was definitely her. Her hair was done up in a ponytail and she appeared to be carrying a large backpack, with appendages sagging from it. She got closer and closer, but nobody said a word or fired a shot. They just watched her move toward them. Not looking around for enemies, not taking any care. Just walking. A very familiar walk.

"Oh fuck me." Jacob said, taking a step back. "I know that walk."

Martin and Shay'est glanced back at him, both confused.

"She's pissed. I ain't goin' near that shit." He made his way to the stairs, but turned his head back one last time to see how close she was. This was his first mistake.

Courtney stood just outside the door. Her hair was partially stained from blood. She was carrying something large. About the size of her; something that had bled red blood onto the side of her head. Something that looked VERY familiar.

Courtney had David's arm around her neck, carrying him alone through the doorway. He looked in as bad a condition as Thel. He had blood coming from his head, which was sagging forward. He was clearly either unconscious or too weak to move much.

Jacob ran back toward her. He and Martin relieved her of David and moved him toward the stairs. They didn't say a word; they merely carefully lifted him up the stairs toward the nearest bedroom to rest him down. He was in a bad way. He had taken a mean hit to the head,

and he was bleeding from his hairline on the left side of his head. His face appeared to have been hit with something large and heavy. Maybe a brute got to him and clocked him in the face.

It was too early to theorize about how he got his injuries. First aid was their main responsibility. Martin began to bandage up his head wound with the last bandages they had left. Jacob returned to the group downstairs. He needed answers.

Shay'est was standing beside Courtney, who seemed to be disregarding Shay'est and was crouching over Thel. Jacob ran towards them as fast as he could. "No! We need him!" He yelled, gripping her by the shoulders. Once he had gripped her shoulders however, he let go. He saw what she was doing.

Courtney had brought a canister of Bio-foam with her. She was applying it to Thel's wound. He reached back with what remained of his energy. "Stop this! I do not need your help! I will not take this. My honour as an elite-"

"Can the honour, asshole. You're going to die if I don't do this, and that's not ideal for the others so shut up and deal with it." She said in a dark voice.

Even the mighty Thel'Watamee whimpered into silence. "Still should not do this." He muttered under his breath like a school child that was denied a cookie; but Courtney brushed it off.

Courtney sprayed the bio-foam into the wound in Thel's lower back, the can made a loud hissing noise, like bug spray. A mist puffed from the wound and Thel'Watamee groaned with pain.

Bio-foam is used by ODST units who have taken a wound to their lungs. It is a temporary solution to an issue like Thel's. The bio-foam is injected into the lung and it expands to seal the wound and has tissue regenerative properties in its chemical makeup. It will stop his wound from filling his lung with blood and will eventually regenerate the tissue. But for it to work he can't get into too much action or reopen the wound.

"There. Now, in about 20 minutes you're going to need to reach a place where you can throw up. That blood in your lung? Yeah that needs to come out. The bio-foam will make your body reject it, so you're going to bring that shit up and it's not going to be pretty." Courtney stood up and turned around to face Jacob. "You. Come with me. We need to talk."

Jacob felt as though he was two feet tall. "Yes'm." he replied like a school boy who is about to get a scolding from his teacher. He was not looking forward to this.

Courtney took him upstairs to the back room where he and Shay'est had previously had their heart-to-heart. "What the hell are you doing?" she yelled "Did you see what kind of condition he was in? And leaving David back there like that? What the hell was that about?!"

"The captain made the decision to stay; he locked US out and stayed behind! Not the other way around! We couldn't have helped him if we tried!" Jacob was not having any of Courtney's shit this time around. "And I didn't even have the medical gear I needed to help Thel! There

was nothing I could do about that either!" Jacob pushed past her and moved back toward the others. "I don't have time for this shit. I have to check on David."

Courtney chased him down the hall, but he didn't care. "How did you get the Bio-foam? And how did you bring David back?"

"Well, after I left you lot back at the hotel," she started "I stumbled across another group of ODST's who were friendly enough to provide me one of their bottles." They entered the room to find Martin sitting by David's side. He had clearly been stabilised. "And as for him, I took down two brutes but the one that cracked him in the face got away." She sat on the other side of the bed from Martin, resting a hand gently on David's forehead where his head trauma was bandaged. "He appeared to be the leader of the group. Big fuck-off chieftain. He had a gravity hammer and everything."

Jacob had a mini panic-attack. "How did you find us?"

"That's another thing we need to talk about." She said, standing up again, waving an arm and prompting him to follow her. "Take a look at this."

At the door, a line leading all the way to the alley and further back, was a trail of Thel's blood, which he had leaked out as he marched from the ONI base all the way to the shop.

"Your big trooper here bled me a nice big bread crumb trail leading right to you." She said. "If that Chieftain has any kind of brains, he won't be too far behind. He would return to the base and easily find the blood. It stands out like sunburn on a zebra."

Jacob roared with rage. His frustration finally got to him. It frightened both Courtney and Shay'est. "Great! Just when I thought we had found a decent spot to rest we have to pack our shit up and move again!"

"Calm down, we'll be alright." Courtney tried to make him relax, raising her arms in a surrendering position.

"We don't have the supplies to take on a chieftain. Especially if he brings backup or another unit with him. We're on our last legs with ammo and two of us are injured and in no shape to fight."

Thel coughed before speaking up. "Scary woman, describe this chieftain to me." He demanded.

She turned around and glared at him for the nickname, but decided to tell him anyway. "Big guy. Fancy looking hammer, he had a hairy gorilla chest and was wearing armour that wasn't like the others. He had a Mohawk with a big spike of hair pointing forward at the end of it."

Thel groaned. "What colour was the armour he wore?"

"Red with some gold on it."

Thel scoffed. "This is bad news. That chieftain is Tartarus' right hand man, Cerberus. He is very dangerous and very highly ranked. Tartarus is one of the covenant's toughest brutes. He himself is the

right hand man of the prophet of regret." Thel coughed and spat up a small portion of blood. "Jacob, help me to my feet. I must reach a place to reject the contents of my lung." He reached out for Jacob's arm.

He helped him to his feet and up the stairs, helping him walk much the same way Courtney helped David walk earlier. "If this chieftain finds us," Thel said "We will not be surviving for much longer."

49. Chapter 49

****49.****

****Location: New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.**

>Timestamp: October 23rd**** 2552. 14:52 hours.****

**>Unit ID: Lieutenant Jacob Matthews (Male, 25, 5'11"),
Orbital Drop Shock Trooper, 7**th**** Shock Troopers
Battalion.****

After some time preparing, Jacob had ensured that everyone was ready in case of an emergency. If their current hiding place was discovered, they would be prepped to grab their things and bolt. However, with the state that David was in now, they would have no choice but to leave him behind. Thel was not looking to be in good shape either; if he did make it out of this, he would need immediate medical attention to survive. Not only did his lungs take on a lot of blood, he also lost a lot from his wound too.

Jacob stepped slowly around the doorway, entering the room David was lying in. There was nobody in the room apart from his captain and himself, so Jacob took this time to spend a moment with him.

"Hey, buddy." He said quietly, almost a whisper. He fought hard to hold back the guilty tears. Jacob blamed himself for the state David was in. If he hadn't left him then maybeâ€|

Jacob bit his lip and inhaled sharply. He felt his eyes start to feel a familiar burn.

"Captainâ€| I'm so sorry." Jacob sat down slowly in the chair beside his friend's bed. "I should have stayed to protect youâ€|" He took a break to breathe and avoid his voice hitching in his throat. "Dammit, why did you have to go and try to be a badass, dying an honourable death." Jacob leant back in his chair, his eyes closed firmly, but facing the ceiling. Tears streamed down both cheeks, rolling past his ears. "You've got Courtney all mad at me, Thel's all jealous and shitâ€| Damn."

Jacob lifted his right arm and pressed his thumb and index fingers against his eyes, trying in vain to suppress the tears.

Jacob inhaled again, sharply. He felt like a child, crying over a lost dog. His tears would not bring his friend back from whatever state he was in and he knew this. He just couldn't stop the tears.

Jacob leaned forward, placing a hand on the bed in front of him and

gazing down at the floor. "What are we going to do without you?" Lately I've been giving the commands here. What are you doing? Slacking off like this?" He chuckled to himself. "Lazy ass. It amazes me you made captain." Jacob bit his lip again.

"Please? We need you? I need you to wake up. I can't do this without you."

Jacob saw his vision blur as tears dropped one by one to the floor between his feet.

"Jacob?"

His head shot up in shock from the familiar voice at the door. Shay'est stood against the door frame, her right hand up in front of her chest, holding her steadily against it. Jacob's vision was too blurry to see if she was crying, or if she had heard anything he had said, but her tone of voice was proof enough of that. He looked away, back toward David, who was still unconscious.

Shay'est stepped slowly toward him and stood behind him. It was evident to her he was hiding his tears, but she did not care. She tenderly placed her hands on his shoulders and leaned down so her head hovered somberly beside his. She felt his shoulder quiver as he tried to hold down his sadness. It was at that moment she felt only for a moment the full burden he held on his shoulders. He was exhausting himself to keep them alive. He was constantly switched on to ensure they were all safe.

Shay'est leant forward further, sliding her arms down Jacob's chest, and resting her head atop his. She held him like this until he found the strength to pull himself together. He breathed in sharply as if to say something, but hesitated and took a moment to gather himself again. Shay'est remained silent; an archangel overwatching the one she protects endure a difficult experience.

"I?" Jacob started. "It's my fault? That he's like this." He quivered again in her grip.

"Jacob?" she started, feeling her eyes burn. "There was nothing you could have done to prevent this? David acted alone to ensure the safety of every one of us." She looked up to observe him, resting almost peacefully, if not for the bandaging around his head. "He is truly a hero."

Jacob scoffed. "Yeah, that's the way he would've wanted it to be. He's almost like one of you lot in that respect." Jacob took a moment to breathe. "He wanted to die a hero's death. To the point where he would almost throw himself at it to achieve that. He's a fool."

Shay'est chuckled softly, her body rubbing against Jacob's back and neck as she did. "A foolish hero. Is your mythology not full of such things?" she looked down at him, smiling tenderly.

Jacob looked to David's face, and observed him lying in the bed. She was right. History and mythology told tales of countless heroes throwing themselves at death to save others. It was just like him. Jacob looked up to meet her eyes. His were red from the crying he had been doing. Perhaps a good cry was exactly what he needed. This

mission was an emotional rollercoaster, and ODS'T marines suppressed their emotions as much as possible normally to ensure they did not affect their mission. He was not used to this.

"I guess you're right. He sure is a hero." He returned her smile, thanking her for her support.

Shay'est nodded gently, slowly and in the same manner, leant forward to link her mouth with Jacobs in a kiss. The kiss lasted a few seconds before a sound awoke them.

A cough from in front of them startled them. The two of them pulled back and looked at each other, puzzled; almost asking through facial gestures if it was either of them that made the sound.

"Can you two get a room..." A raspy, almost dead voice said "This one's kinda takenâ€|"

Jacob shot up out of the chair, almost knocking Shay'est flat on her ass with a headbutt that would have done a ram proud. "David!" he exclaimed, pressing both hands against the bed and staring into the one eye that had not been covered by bandaging. "You're awake!"

He chuckled in the bed, still not moving. "Yeah." He coughed "but I could've done with a different wake up showâ€|"

* * *

><p>Hey ladies and gentlemen! :)<p>

Happy to be returning to writing Enemy of My Enemy. It's been ages since I posted another chapter for this story. Sorry about that guys ^.^"

I've been incredibly busy lately. Being in my final semester of study, there's naturally lots that has to be done. However, while I am off doing that I am almost constantly brainstorming for this story, so you can expect a few new chapters from me in the near future.

Hope you enjoyed reading this chapter, and I can't wait to start reading all of your reviews! :)

Please remember to review and I'll remember to keep writing :)

50. Chapter 50

50.

**Location: New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.

>Timestamp: October 23rd**** 2552. 15:06hours.**

>Unit ID: Lieutenant Jacob Matthews (Male, 25, 5'11"), Orbital Drop Shock Trooper, 7th**** Shock Troopers Battalion.**

David was awake. His eye blinked and looked about the room, but he didn't move his body. He seemed very confused.

"Whereâ€¦"

Jacob cut his question off with an answer. "You're alright buddy, we're in a small building close to the city centre. I think we'll make it there if you shape up on time. Can you move?"

David looked at Jacob and blinked a couple of times, then began to slowly conduct a systems check. If he could move after the massive concussive damage he had suffered it would be a miracle. He wriggled his fingers and toes, then began to slowly move his arms and legs. He looked up to Jacob and slowly nodded. "While I may be of not a whole lot of use to you in heated combat, I might do alright as a hang-back support."

Jacob chuckled. "As most captains areâ€¦" He looked back to find Shay'est standing, smiling wide at him. He looked back to David. "I can't express how glad I am to have you back." His eyes welled up with tears again, but this time tears of a different kind.

David chuckled. "Cry baby. Go grab the others for me will ya? I think I'm in need of a brief to catch me up to speed."

Jacob nodded and turned to Shay'est. She nodded and went to gather the others. He turned back to David. "So how many more times are you going to try and get yourself killed like this?"

He laughed, but then flinched and groaned. "I guess laughing's out of the question for a while." He shifted in his bed to try and gain some comfort. "and to answer your question, always at least once more." He smiled.

Jacob laughed. "Asshole."

Without a moment passing, the others were rushing through the door. Courtney had to stop and almost fall over to prevent herself from leaping on top of David to make sure he was okay. "David!" she cried out.

"There she is," he smiled. "How are you Courts?" he almost sat up in his bed suddenly. "What's that blood on your hair? Did you get wounded?" he asked with great concern.

Jacob chuckled. "Glad to see you're still yourself."

Courtney laughed. "It's not my blood, silly. That's yours, Cap." She smiled. "You bled that much and still made it out like a champ. How are you feeling?"

He chuckled. "Like I got hit by a train on steroids."

Shay'est looked at Jacob with confusion. He looked back at her, ready for her question.

>"I am confused. What are steroids? Are they the steel rails that your trains run on here?"<p>

Jacob laughed. "No, I'll tell you later." He smiled. It had been a while since everyone was in such good spirits. He planned to do anything he could to keep it that way until they were truly safe and all of this was over.

David was slowly gathering back his energy and Courtney was now tending to his side. Some time had passed since their gathering, and Courtney was now catching David up to speed. Shay'est and Jacob returned to Thel, to find Martin looking after him.

"Okay, sport. Your turn; go say hi to sleeping beauty." Jacob said, his hands on his hips, jerking his head up toward the stairs, signalling for Martin to go. It didn't take much persuasion for him to be up on his feet and running for the stairs. Jacob and Shay'est relieved him of his watch duty.

"You do not need to concern yourself with me, human." He sputtered. "I will be alright." His mouth made promises his body could not keep. His condition was slowly worsening, and it was apparent he would not last a long while. If they were going to extract him, they had to get him out of here soon.

"You're looking in a pretty crap state, mateâ€¦" Jacob crouched down to meet Thel'Watamee. "You sure you're going to keep up if we make a move?" Jacob said, concern in his voice.

Thel scoffed. "Hah, foolish human, you cannot keep a Sangheili warrior on his behind for long. His hunger for battle will kick in and he will move." Thel propped his right arm up with a piece of steel that sat beside him, using it as a crutch to steady himself as he slowly rose. "I have yet to meet anything that can kill me."

Jacob felt almost inspired by the elite's effort. "Glad to hear it. Keep it up and we might still have some use for you yet." He laughed out his backhanded compliment.

Jacob turned to Shay'est and gave her a grimace. She caught a glimpse of Jacob's signal and her brow twitched, almost for a second forming a sad frown. "Hey, this guy can take care of himself. Mind if we have a talk? I need to patrol the perimeter and you would make some good company." Jacob attempted to make an excuse to speak with her in private.

Shay'est nodded and pulled her carbine rifle from her back. It would be a good use of their time if Thel'Watamee could indeed remain a good lookout. The others were just upstairs anyway.

Jacob nodded and turned back to face Thel, who was keeping himself propped up with the piece of steel with one arm and holding his plasma rifle with the other. "The others are just upstairs. If anything happens or you spot anything, give them a yell."

Thel nodded, and Jacob returned the gesture.

"Alright girly," Jacob turned back to Shay'est, "let's get a move on. Daylight's wasting."

Shay'est nodded and followed him out the back door and into the alleyway beside the shop. Jacob followed the barrel of his SMG around each corner, scanning the surroundings with his eyes. His helmet was attached to his hip, and he decided to dismount it from his belt and put it on.

His visor lit up and created a border around his surroundings,

technologically scanning the surroundings to help create distance in his HUD. It helped highlight enemies on the battlefield and aided snipers in finding a good lookout point. Give an ODS'T marine a sniper rifle and a visor, and he can hold out until the end of his life.

Jacob slowly moved left down the alleyway, focussing on his surroundings. He wasn't expecting anything to be around, or else they would have been heard, but he did observe thoroughly just in case. He decided now was a good time to start conversation.

"Heyâ€|" he whispered loudly back to Shay'est, so only they could hear. "I'm sorry, but I can't guarantee Thel will make it. In the condition he's in it looks like he can barely move, let alone keep up with us."

"What are you suggesting?" she whispered back, with some brunt behind her tone. "That we leave him here?"

"I'm not saying that, but if it comes down to it and he can't keep up when we do get movingâ€|" Jacob turned the corner and observed the back streets. There were no enemies around. "Then we may need to leave him wherever we get to and let him continue on his own."

* * *

><p>Hey everyone!<p>

Look at that! The big 5-0! Wow. I'm proud of all of you who have followed the story so far. To my dedicated reviewers and readers I salute you.

I know of a fair few who have followed since my first upload, and I keep in close contact with a few of them. (honourable mention to Solid G3 Legend.)

Anyway, thanks for reading this chapter, and I hope you thoroughly enjoyed it, and the story before it. And I hope you continue to enjoy the story for every chapter after this.

Thank you for reading, and remember to review every chance you get! Even a "Hey I liked this chapter" or something, every little bit keeps me writing. :)

51. Chapter 51

51.

**Location: New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.

>Timestamp: October 23***rd**** 2552. 15:30hours.**

>Unit ID: Lieutenant Jacob Matthews (Male, 25, 5'11"),
Orbital Drop Shock Trooper, 7***th**** Shock Troopers
Battalion.**

After they had rounded the building's backside, Jacob and Shay'est entered back through the door where Thel stood, his rifle aimed at them as they neared the doorway. Jacob felt his instincts kick in and almost pulled his trigger before Thel had the chance, but luckily

hesitated and waited for Thel to work out what was going on. Besides, Thel's shields would have taken the bullets before Jacob would've been able to do any real damage. The way their shields worked was that they took projectile damage but not melee. That's why Jacob carried his knife. It was the same with brutes, for the most part.

As soon as they entered Shay'est looked at Thel and quickly observed him up and down, before turning around and storming up the stairs and walking toward the room on the end where she and Jacob had shared a conversation when they first found this building.

Jacob heard the door shut from downstairs and jolted when it closed. For a moment he worried it would attract attention, but after their sweep they found nothing so he calmed himself. He turned back around toward the door they entered through and sighed, his eyes closed.

"Females, huh?" Thel said. If his facial muscles allowed him to grin, he would be holding the biggest one that Jacob had ever seen.

Jacob nodded and slowly went for the stairs. He sensed they needed to share some words if their alliance was to continue. When he reached the top of the stairs, he found Martin standing in David's doorway. The two looked at each other as Jacob passed.

"Trouble in paradise?"

"Shut upâ€¦ Is he up to speed?" Jacob asked about David. "I've just done a perimeter check and we seem to be all clear, but keep an ear out."

Martin nodded and Jacob turned back toward the end of the hall. "He's caught up, and he wants to talk to you. Good luck with her!" he called as Jacob walked further and further down the hall. Jacob feigned sarcastic laughter back at his friend, before going for the door.

Shay'est was looking out the window of the room, gazing down the alleyway they exited the building through on their perimeter check. Jacob walked in and closed the door behind him, but she didn't move.

"Bang." He said, causing her to turn and look at him, confused. "You're sniper fodder." He explained. "Damn Jackals love unsuspecting people in windows." He complained.

"True enough, the Kig-Yar marksmen choose their shots wisely." She turned to look back out the window. "Humans should follow their example." She finished, now clearly on the topic of the words fired in their conversation in the alley where she gazed.

"Shay'est, I didn't mean we leave him here now." Jacob tried to explain his thought process. "By all means we should bring him with us, but there's a limit to how far someone in his condition can push themselves, you know?" Jacob stepped slowly closer to Shay'est in an effort to ease the tension and comfort her.

"I refuse to be any part of leaving him to die." She turned to face Jacob, aware of his approach and looking him face to face, a few feet

away. "I will give my own life attempting to bring him with us." She said sternly.

Jacob sighed. "Why are women so complicated?" he asked himself, looking down and scratching the back of his head. "Look, we're all going to try and keep him with us, and the same with David. The thing is Thel is deteriorating just sitting down. If he moves around too much after the amount of blood he's lost" Jacob started, trying to explain the next part in ways Shay'est could understand.

"He will pass out. Correct?" She finished his thought process for him.

Surprised she knew about that phrase, he nodded and frowned again, the same way he did earlier. His mind pictured them running when the situation was dire, being fired upon, and Thel losing consciousness, falling in the middle of an open area and getting riddled with spiker fire. He looked down to the floor between Shay'est and himself.

"If we aren't careful, not only will Thel be killed from moving around too much," he looked back up to her. "He'll bring us all with him."

Shay'est locked eyes with Jacob and after a few moments turned left and sat on the bed, her head falling sluggishly into her hands.

"Shay'est" There's a saying here on Earth" Jacob said, sitting beside her, resting his right hand on her left thigh. "You weigh the needs of the many, versus the needs of the few."

She looked up at him, processing his words. Her eyes welled with tears.

"We all have to make choices we don't want to make. It's part of our life as soldiers. Hell, I've gone days where I've made hundreds." He breathed in heavily, training himself for his next words. "It defines us as who we are by the way we make these choices, and carry ourselves over the consequences." He continued to look at her.

She returned his stare, and slowly nodded. Her eyes filled with tears and she leaned against him, her head on his right shoulder. Jacob wrapped his right arm around her, holding her against his chest. "The saying means that sometimes you have to choose between the lesser of two evils. Sometimes both the choices you're given are crap but you still have to make one."

He felt her nod against his chest. He stayed for a few minutes with her before looking down to unfortunately break the mood. "Hey, I'm sorry but David needs to see me. Mind if I scoot off down the hall and speak with him? I need to work out our next plan of attack with him."

Shay'est nodded and pecked Jacob on the cheek. He felt a wave of relief flow down his body that they were able to set the issue between them aside. She made it clear she was staying in the room for a while to continue her thoughts.

Jacob stood, and moved out the door, closing it behind him. As he walked down the hall, he thought about their strategic options. They

could stick to the shadows and alleys; their safest method of escape, but the most time consuming. It would likely mean those who are injured would not escape with their lives. Or they could bum-rush it to the capital building, guns blazing. It would mean they would reach it in a day, easily, but they would also take heavy casualties.

Jacob reached the room to find the rest of his squad standing around waiting for him, and David sitting up on the edge of his bed, bandages still over one side of his head. His free eye observed Jacob enter the room, and he nodded, confirming they were ready to begin their discussion.

52. Chapter 52

****52.****

****Location: New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.**

>Timestamp: October 23*rd**** 2552. 15:53hours.****

**>Unit ID: Lieutenant Jacob Matthews (Male, 25, 5'11"),
Orbital Drop Shock Trooper, 7***th**** Shock Troopers
Battalion.****

"Okay, let's talk business. We don't know how much time we have, and now that our personal business is sorted," David nodded at Jacob, who appreciatively nodded back "we can start working out what our next move is. What's the big bastard downstairs looking like?" He asked Jacob.

"Well," Jacob looked down at the floor. "That's what I was just discussing with Shay'estâ€| He may not make it to the end. His condition is deteriorating rapidly, and that's just while he was sitting down." Jacob looked back up at the others to see they were not looking happy about the fact. "Now that he's up and moving around, he needs to be supported by some form of crutch, at the moment it's a piece of steel he picked up, but even still with him moving, he won't be able to go anywhere too fast. If we do try to move at speed with the amount of blood he's lost, he'll pass out and likely get us all killed."

There was a moment of quiet thought between the hive mind of the collective marines.

"So," David said seriously. "What are you thinking we do? Put him down before we move out? Or bring him with us?" He looked Jacob in the eyes, ready for whatever had to be done to ensure they survived.

Jacob sternly said back "I'm sure you must have realized by now, they are part of our team. And I intend to keep it that way. You managed to zombie your way back from the dead to join us again, but he might not be so lucky. He is one tough bastard I'll give him that, and if we put him down here it wouldn't bode well for the morale of the team." Jacob looked at the others for signs of agreement. "I vote we take him with us until he decides to punch out. At least give him that much for the cooperation he's shown us." Jacob's choice was met with agreement throughout the room. He decided to finish with "You have to risk it for the biscuit."

"Yeah, no shit." Martin agreed. "We aren't getting out of here alive without taking a few risks. Hell we've been lucky enough to survive the risk of bringing the elites in with us, but how many more can we take I wonder before our luck runs out?"

"Not many I wager." David said. "If he does end up passing out or being unable to continue, we won't be able to bring him with us at all. We can't carry that heavy bastard, he weighs about half a car." David said, ensuring Jacob was ready should the time come to leave him behind.

"I won't do anything to risk our lives should he end up going down. Its decided that if he goes down, he stays there unless he decides to get back up and move on his own without getting killed. We can't afford to have him slowing us down." Jacob agreed sternly. He didn't want to agree with that fact after the way they had formed a kind of bond, but he had to. The time for hard decision making was now and they couldn't afford to leave any leeway.

"Alright, that's sorted. Now to our bigger issue." David said, finally standing up and starting to move slowly around the room. The rate he was recovering at was remarkable for normal people but about standard for a marine. They were highly trained and as a result were some pretty resilient sons of bitches. "This big brute. The one that's the right hand man of that Tartarus fellowâ€¦ Cerberus I believe the big guy called him?"

Apparently they had caught him right up to speed.

"Yes, that's him." Jacob confirmed.

"Well, he's the one who gave me this," David pointed at the bandages around his head. "And he's one scary bastard. I doubt I'll get much sleep after our little encounter." David continued walking around, now beginning to throw some stretching into his movements. "If we encounter him, what's our plan? Are we in any shape to fight him? Or will we have to run?"

Jacob thought about this. If this brute chieftain was indeed as dangerous as Thel said, then he would be a much bigger issue for them than the regular brutes and patrols they have faced. If they do run into him, he is going to bring a lot of hurt to them. It is likely he probably won't go down unless he brings them with him.

"Well," Jacob started. "We'll cross that bridge when we get to it. If we have the ability to put up a fight, then I'm not going out with my tail between my legs."

"Hell yeah!" Courtney agreed in her usual manner. "He wants a fight we'll give him one."

"But," David said "we have to remember our goal is to get up there to the top, above the cloud layer. If we can get past the layer the shockwave left we'll be alright."

Jacob looked at him, puzzled. "What layer?"

"Um, let me interject here." Martin stepped in. "The ship that warped out of here, and left the wave from the slip space ruptureâ€¦ It also

left a layer of static discharge, just below the cloud layer. That's what is blocking out our communications to our capital and nearby frigates. If we get up past, say the 50 to 60th floor of that capital building, we should be able to rise above the static layer and be able to send a decent signal for the search and rescue team to track. At the moment with that layer there, their transmitters and radars will only be showing everything down here as being completely dead. And with the wreckage I don't blame them for believing it." Martin returned to his spot leaning against the far wall.

"Right. So we get up that high, we'll be able to contact for an evac." Jacob confirmed.

"Bingo." David agreed. "However, getting there is the issue. With the power out, stairs are our only option. And with the condition Thel'Watamee is in, if we're being chased up those stairs by contacts, we're in deep, deep shit."

Jacob couldn't agree more. There were a lot of scenarios in which Thel was going to die in their escape, but if he could help it he would make sure he made it out of there with them. It was the least he could do to repay him for his allegiance.

53. Chapter 53

****53.****

****Location: New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.
>Timestamp: October 23***rd**** 2552. 16:12hours.****

**>Unit ID: Lieutenant Jacob Matthews (Male, 25, 5'11"),
Orbital Drop Shock Trooper, 7***th**** Shock Troopers
Battalion.****

With the plans they thought were best finally laid out, the ODS Ts dispersed from the room, Courtney returning to tend to Thel, and Jacob returning to Shay'est. If they were going to get through this, they needed to make sure their allies were with them. He knocked on the door and walked in without much notice, finding Shay'est lying spread out across the bed, waiting for him.

He was reminded for an instant about their time in the hotel, before blushing and looking down, scratching the back of his head. "So, uhâ€¦" he started, awkwardly. "We have worked out a strategy for what we're going to do nextâ€¦ Butâ€¦" He looked back up at her. "Thel's chances are not looking fantastic."

Shay'est nodded, keeping a stern expression. "I am aware of this, but we are still going to be taking him with us at least, correct?"

"Yes, he is still joining us, but if he goes down, we don't have time to help him. He'll have to continue on his own."

Shay'est nodded slowly in agreement. She had realized that this was their only viable option. "So are we going to take things slow? Or are we going to get there as quickly as possible?"

"Well," he said "A vehicle is out of the question. Too much attention

and hostile presence around the capital building is going to be massive. We'd be taken apart before we got within a few hundred metres of the placeâ€¦ We'll have to move as quickly as we can, but we are sticking to the shadows. If we stay out in the open we'll be picked off by snipers."

Shay'est nodded in affirmation. "Agreed. I am glad that we are bringing Thel'Watamee along with us." She displayed her gratitude by reaching forward and grasping Jacob's wrist, gazing into his eyes. She was laying out across the bed on her belly, looking up at him.

"Anyway, get yourself ready." Jacob stepped back, looking away to hide the red his face was turning to "we could leave at any moment so make sure we don't end up being slowed down by you not being prepared."

Shay'est stood up from the bed and picked her rifle up from its position, leaning against the wall. She had various pieces of gear laid out on the ground beside it. "I will be ready."

"Thank you." Jacob said, going for the door. "I'm going to check on the others okay?" he said turning around.

Shay'est was bending down, picking up the pieces from the ground. She looked up at him and smiled. "Alright."

Jacob made his way down the hall, attempting to shake the red off of his cheeks. His teammates were gathered around Thel in the lobby, apparently explaining to him what the situation was. He was nodding, which was a good sign. He looked up to watch Jacob enter the room.

"Thank you." He said.

Jacob almost stopped in his tracks completely. A thank you is not something he was expecting from Thel'Watamee. "For what?" he continued walking.

"With your input, I was allowed to continue with you toward the evacuation area. Without your input I would surely have been left for dead. So I thank you." Thel'Watamee said respectfully.

Jacob nodded. Such respect was the last thing he expected to receive from Thel. He fully expected a backhanded compliment of some kind followed by a death threat. This was bizarre. "You'll be an invaluable asset. We need you." Jacob reassured him. A Sangheili warrior that has been pumped up for battle is indeed a valuable asset. Sometimes a little inflated ego can save others.

Thel'Watamee scoffed. "Of course you need me. Without me you will all die. You stand no chance against Cerberus." He coughed and sputtered.

"There's the Thel I know." Jacob walked over to join the pack. "Also, about himâ€¦ What can you tell us about this Cerberus brute. I understand he won't be easy to kill, but can we do it if we had to?"

Thel looked at each one of them and looked back to Jacob. "Jacobâ€¦"

He started. "From the moment I first came into contact with the group of you, I have witnessed you all perform nothing but impossible tasks. If anyone has a chance to best Cerberus in combat, it is the group of you." He had to stop abruptly to cough up some blood. "However, he has an equal chance of defeating you all also."

"Fair enough." Jacob said, cocking his SMG and prepping it, aiming down his sights and pointing it at the door, ready for combat. "That's good enough for me. If it bleeds we can kill it right?"

Thel'Watamee laughed heartily but then coughed. "I like that saying human. I might just claim it as my own if I make it out of this."

"Can you hold a gun and use it efficiently?" Jacob asked, pulling up his helmet and placing it on his head.

Thel'Watamee nodded and lifted his plasma rifle with his left hand. "I can."

"Then be prepared to use it. If you're tagging along then you'll be expected to fight along too." Jacob said. "Let's sync up our radios."

The team all pressed a button on the outside of their helmets that linked them all together. They could now communicate over distance. Martin's makeshift genius does it again.

"If we're going to make this, we've gotta be communicating constantly. We'll head out that door and up the street, hugging the wall of the shops and buildings on this side of the road." Jacob nodded toward the door across the room, where he and Shay'est had previously exited to check the perimeter. "Luckily for us this street is a straight shot up to the capital building, but it also means we can expect a fair few patrols moving past here."

The team nodded toward him and prepared their weapons. David still had one eye covered, but luckily for him, his good eye was still working and that's all he needed.

"Shay'est!" Jacob called out. "Are you ready? We're about to head out."

She appeared at the top of the stairs, carbine rifle in her hands, and ready as ever. "Just try and stop me."

* * *

><p>Hey everyone!<p>

Thank you again for reading and remember to review after you've finished!

Things are about to get really interesting. We're nearing our big grand finale! I can't wait! It's going to be so much fun.

Anyway, hope you enjoyed the read, and can't wait to hear from you all about what you think. Thanks guys! :)

54. Chapter 54

****54.****

****Location: New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.**

>Timestamp: October 23rd**** 2552. 16:24hours.****

**>Unit ID: Lieutenant Jacob Matthews (Male, 25, 5'11"),
Orbital Drop Shock Trooper, 7**th**** Shock Troopers
Battalion.****

Jacob nodded towards David, their helmets on and ready to go.
"Check." He said, testing that they could hear his microphone.

The others nodded. "Check." They repeated.

Getting David's helmet on was a struggle, with the fragile condition his head was in. The last thing they wanted was to put pressure on the head wound and give him a concussion. So they carefully placed it on earlier, which he objected to; insisting they were treating him like a child.

Jacob turned back to Thel'Watamee and Shay'est, who were standing at the ready. "Alright," he started, hoisting his SMG up, aiming it at the roof in a standby position. "We're heading out the back door behind me, where we went on our perimeter check. We've got Martin on point, David and I behind him, with you and Thel on the back, watching behind us for activity." Jacob turned toward Thel. "I want you to remember that if you go down, and the situation is too tense for us to help your ass up, you're staying there unless you can move along at your own free will."

Thel'Watamee nodded, obviously remembering his lecture from before that he had received from the rest of the group. "I understand this already. Let us move. I am getting restless waiting around here." He said, clearly on edge. "What about you? Have you enough ammunition?" He nodded toward Jacob's SMG.

David chuckled. "Don't you worry about that dude. An ODST has more than just his guns."

Jacob joined David in chuckling. "That's the truth. If I run out of ammo that's when things get really fun." Jacob tapped the knife strapped to his chest with his left free hand. "I've been trained extensively since before I even joined the military 7 years ago. I am fluent with several fighting styles and I am more than happy to use them." Jacob readied his SMG and turned back toward the other ODST's. "We currently have a civil war going on. Insurgents against the UNSC. ODST's are our biggest weapon against them. We can't spare most of our units, but we've been in the thick of it. The insurgents are highly trained in combat too. I've killed 16 with my bare hands." Jacob looked toward the door, not meeting eyes with anyone. "An ODST is a weapon. We use weapons, but ultimately our body is a weapon in and of itself."

There was a moment of silence before Martin interjected. "Um, want me to take point and we can get a move on?"

Jacob jerked his head upward toward the door, still watching ahead.

He was ready for anything they had to face. Even this 'Cerberus' chieftain the others seemed so worried about. Jacob was ready. He wanted to get out of here, and when he wants something this badly, he works his ass off to get it. He wanted the others safe and Thel in a condition where he's properly stabilised.

The team moved single file out the door, then right toward the front face of the building and into the open street. There was a cold, chilling breeze flowing through the streets. Jacob could feel it barely through his armour. It was refreshing.

The street was empty, apart from one overturned car lying in the middle of the road a couple of hundred metres up. The car was unidentifiable from this distance.

They slowly and carefully walked up the street, hugging the wall on the side they came out of. The buildings were empty, desolate, and dead. The city looked dead. Anything that used to live here was incapable of doing so now. There was one hell of a clean up to get done if this place was ever going to be populated again.

As they moved up the street further and further, Jacob began to recognise the wrecked vehicle more and more. Eventually he was certain. It was a transportation warthog. It looked to have been hit by something big, and flipped over. Strangely, there were no marines in the wreck. It was empty.

Moving past the car, Jacob heard a sound. It was a soft crack, but it was a sound that startled him. He instinctively crouched and spun left, locking his view on the alleyway he was beside, and holding his SMG ready to fire on anything he might see. What he did see brought a smile to his face.

"Friendlies!" Jacob said, standing and moving down the alley, toward the marine he had seen, leaning out of a doorway. He approached them first, with the rest of the squad following.

"ODST marines! Sir, we're saved!" The marine called back to someone behind him. There was another marine sitting in the doorway, but the door was closed. How long they had been waiting here was a mystery. "Sir," the marine said, offering a salute to Jacob "Private James Server. This here's my Sergeant, Joseph Conway." He stepped back revealing the other marine.

The other marine sitting on the floor slowly stood up, holding himself up against the door frame. He was wounded. He seemed to have suffered some kind of trauma to his torso, judging by the way he was clutching it with his left hand. He looked up to Jacob and nodded.

"Hey boys, how are you holding up?" Jacob asked, turning back reaching toward Martin and tapping him twice on the left shoulder. This signalled him to move forward and provide medical assistance for the injured marine. "Got any plans or are you just hanging around here? I assume that was your Warthog in the street?"

"Yes sir, that was us. We were hit by a brute. He justâ€¦ Stepped out into the roadâ€¦ Andâ€¦" The marine looked back toward his commanding officer, who was being examined by Martin. "I don't know how, but with one swing of that damn hammer he overturned the whole thingâ€¦"

It was terrifying."

Jacob patted the man once on the shoulder. "You're a marine, you don't feel fear." He chuckled. "How many have you lost?" his tone suddenly dropped back to serious.

"Uhâ€¦ 2. No, wait, 3. We lost Marcus a few hours ago back there." He pointed with his thumb back over his shoulder. "About 500 metres away, we were hit by a sniper. We just booked it as fast as we could to get over here to cover. But the sarge seems to be hurt. That's why he sat down. We're just recovering now and thinking about our next move. We were searching for survivors."

Jacob wondered for a moment about the brute the marine mentioned. But then switched back on, as there were more pressing matters now. "So how's he looking, Techie?" Jacob leaned right, looking past the marine. He decided to use callsigns so as to avoid any funny business. This is what they were taught fighting the insurgents, as it was a common tactic to dress themselves up as marines then surprise attack squads.

"Well he's hurt pretty bad, Shadow. He seems to have fractured his ribs. Massive trauma." Martin stood back up. "I don't think we have the medical supplies to patch him up here." He looked back down toward the sergeant. "Sir, do you think you'll be able to make it out of here? Can you still walk?"

"Son," the marine said. "I am a sergeant of the UNSC marine corps. I know what I'm about." He stood up slowly but surely. "No brute's going to bring me down, the dirty monkeys."

David nodded. "That's what I'm talking about. Good work." He glanced back to Shay'est and Thel. Then returned his gaze to the others. "So how do we explain these two?" but his sentence was cut short, as he quickly lifted his weapon. "CONTACT!" He shouted.

55. Chapter 55

****55.****

****Location: New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.**

>Timestamp: October 23*rd**** 2552. 16:38hours.****

>Unit ID: Shay'est (Female, 6'1") Sangheili, Domo recruit.

Shay'est's heart stopped as she saw what had somehow crept up on them. Looming over Martin's head stood a giant brute; taller than any of the squad. He wore blood red armour with a gold trim and had a Mohawk of grey hair, with the front part of the Mohawk spiking forward. He wielded a gigantic gravity hammer, which he had raised back behind his head, ready to bring down and cause a tonne of damage.

Martin thankfully dove forward toward David and the others, who had begun backing up, and raising their weapons. The gravity hammer came down with an abundance of force, slamming into the ground and causing a bright blue flash of light. It flung the marine sergeant back against the door frame, slamming the back of his neck against the

upper frame above the door, and dropping him to the floor. The other marine Jacob had just been talking to fell forward from the force of the blast, down at Jacob's feet.

Shay'est raised her carbine rifle to fire at the brute, but Jacob was obstructing her path, and so was David. The others began to fire and Shay'est's ears were surprised by a loud barrage of light weapons fire. Thel was in the back but he could still raise his plasma rifle up above the others' heads with ease due to his height. The SMG's from the ODS'T marines sent off a rally of shots as the squad all backed up quickly but carefully.

The bullets impacted the brute, but his shields took all of the hits. The bullets stopped dead against the bright blue forcefield that materialized around him. The bullets ricocheted off of the shield against the walls of the buildings beside them, and some of them even just bounced back off of the shield and fell to the ground almost comically.

The brute was angered, and lifted its hammer again, but this time spinning it around to reveal the large, curved blade on the back of it. He brought it down on top of the other marine at Jacob's feet who still hadn't moved to his own feet. The brute roared as he slammed the blade into the back of the crawling man. Blood sprayed from his back, up against the wall, and toward Jacob's legs. The man let out a short, bloodcurdling scream of pain, then flopped dead against the floor.

"Retreat!" David called out, "Continue up toward the tower, move now!" He cried out, his voice sounding both angry and terrified. "Move!" he screamed back toward the elites.

Shay'est took the hint and turned back, first checking left and right down the street to make sure they weren't moving straight into the line of more enemy fire. Her heart pounded loudly in her ears. She was not ready to face such a monster. The SMG fire was doing almost nothing, what could she do?

The street was clear, so she moved left, continuing up toward the tower. She took one step, shakily, then another, followed by another. She was trembling with fear but kept pushing her body forward; willing for that next step that could mean her freedom from this nightmare. Shay'est had made it 20 meters up the road before turning to see that the others hadn't followed her.

She spotted David and Martin, running across the road, firing back toward the alley she had come from. They ran directly into an opposing alleyway. She looked back toward the alley the gigantic brute was in to see Thel'Watamee, limping back toward the building they had come from before, being held up by Courtney who was acting like a crutch, much like the way she had done for David when she brought him back to the squad. Shay'est began to panic. Her breath hitched in her throat and she did not know what to do.

Almost a full few seconds had passed before her shining glimmer of hope came barreling toward her. Jacob came sprinting from the alleyway, his arms holding his SMG, cradling it rapidly across his chest with each step. "Run!" he screamed, reaching out to spin her around and keep pushing her forward.

"The others-" Shay'est started, in a panic, but her words were cut short.

"Forget them! No time, just run!" He yelled forward, before turning back to see if the brute was following them. Thankfully it had run blindly out into the alleyway, and taken some time to look around for them. The adrenaline from taking those two kills had made his vision shaky. This was common with Brutes with an insatiable bloodlust.

Shay'est hazarded a glance back also as she ran, seeing SMG fire coming from the opposing alleyway that David and Martin had run into. They were drawing the brute toward them, but fleeing at the same time. This way the others could escape. She took her eyes away from the startling situation and focused only on the path before her. The road was reaching a dead end, and she again panicked.

Jacob grabbed her arm and pulled her toward the shops. "In here!" he yelled, almost throwing her into an alleyway they passed by.

She threw herself up against the wall of the alley between the two buildings, her heart pounding and her breath wooshing in and out of her lungs. She could barely hold herself up. That brute was terrifying. She had never seen anything like it. It swung its hammer in half the time a regular brute would, displaying an abundance of power and a terrifying need to kill.

"Whatâ€¦" Shay'est began to ask, but continued to hyperventilate to keep her lungs full of air. "What wasâ€¦ That thing?" she said, panicking yet again just thinking about what it did to the marines they were speaking to.

"Thatâ€¦" Jacob also breathed heavily, before correcting himself and standing up straight. His training meant he was able to recover from such sprints with remarkable ease. "Was Cerberus. The brute that almost killed David back at the sword base."

56. Chapter 56

****56.****

****Location: New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.**

>Timestamp: October 23rd**** 2552. 16:45hours.****

>Unit ID: Shay'est (Female, 6'1") Sangheili, Domo recruit.

Shay'est pressed her back against the wall, the cold concrete chilling her back from the gaps in her armour. "Cerberus?" she asked, watching Jacob walk past, toward the back of the building they were against. "The right hand of Tartarus? Why is he over here? Was he not back at the base?"

"Evidently he has followed the blood trail left by David and Courtney." He continued moving, stopping only to look back and watch Shay'est. He jerked his head back, signalling her to follow him.

She did just that. Placing one foot in front of the other, she had made her recovery and was ready again to move. "Where are we

going?"

"Full of questions, aren't you?" Jacob asked, reaching the end of the alley. "Well," he stuck his head out, looking left and right for any potential threats. "We're heading for that tower. We're going to rendezvous near the base of it. Hopefully they'll make it there too. That was the plan in case we got split up." Jacob began to move slowly out of the alley into the next street, continuing toward the direction of the tower, which drew ever closer. "It looked like the brute was travelling alone. Maybe he was separated from his unit or maybe he was just after us alone. Regardless, I don't want to meet with him again soon, so let's keep a move on."

Shay'est nodded, but Jacob couldn't see, as he was facing the other direction. "I agree." She said, so he knew her position.

"I have seen him before." Jacob said, not looking back, focusing only on the road ahead of them and any flanking positions the enemy could appear from. "Cerberus. I have seen him before."

Shay'est was surprised. They hadn't seen him at the base, he had arrived after they had fled, so where could he have seen the brute chieftain before. "Are you certain?"

"Yes." He said. "When I saved you. The first time we met. I took you from that alley into the hotel and upstairs. Remember?"

Shay'est took a moment to think. She was out cold at the time so she could recall nothing of that, but she certainly remembered the before and after. "Yes."

"Well, when I was up there watching out the window, down on where I took you from, there was a grunt. Looked like he led the two brutes over to where you were. But when he got there and you were gone, the brute he escorted blasted him in the back of the head. That brute was the same one that just attacked us now. I'm sure of it." Jacob said, telling her about his recollection of the situation. "That was the grunt you called 'Major', I believe."

Shay'est's heart stopped. The major had betrayed her and gone to the brutes when he was informed about the revolt. He left her weak and helpless and then got a brute to finish the job so that he could earn a better reputation for the brute command. She felt sick to her stomach thinking she could look up to the grunt. Shay'est looked up to find that she had stopped in the middle of the street, and Jacob was waiting in the doorway of a building across from her, waving her over.

She took a deep breath and marched forward. She tried to slide past Jacob, but he extended his hand and gripped her arm, holding her stationary in the doorway, close to him. She looked up to him, confused.

"Hey, listen." Jacob said, face to face in the doorway, "There's only one thing that matters here. You are still here. You are still breathing. He isn't. If you're still breathing, and you're still alive, then you're a soldier and you'll have my back, got it?"

He let go of her arm, but she stayed in front of him, as she could see he had something more to say.

"You feel that anger? That hunger for vengeance against the little guy? Own it. Use it for your future fights. It will fuel your ability to press on. Use it to go further than he ever could." He turned right, and made his way inside the building, checking around for signs of contacts.

Jacob's words shook her to the core. They changed her way of thinking. He was right; regardless of what happens, as long as Shay'est could still draw breath, she had to keep moving. She had to get out of this, and she had to help Jacob get out of this. Without her he would be alone, and his chances of surviving out here would be very slim. If she didn't have his back, nobody would.

Shay'est walked inside, confident that Jacob was checking the building better than she ever could. His training was incredible. He was able to see more than an elite domo like herself ever could. It was almost comical how painfully outgunned she and many other elites were compared to the UNSC ODST troopers. A single ODST unit could wipe out her and many of her friends without breaking a sweat. It was amazing.

Jacob slowly crept through the building, and Shay'est watched his feet. The way he glided so smoothly over the ground, the way he stepped around shards of broken glass so that he wouldn't alert his presence to anything around that could potentially hear him, it was all almost transcendental. She wondered how many advanced combat strategies and other deadly points of information had been drilled into his brain. He said earlier that his body itself was a weapon; was he trained so that he was subconsciously so combat-able that he could kill without even thinking?

Shay'est shook her mind of these thoughts. She couldn't afford to paint Jacob like this. Not now. She could shake all thoughts but one; one thought that had been stuck on replay in her mind for a long timeâ€¦

What would happen to them after all of this was over?

* * *

><p>Hey readers!<p>

Hope you've enjoyed the latest chapter. My plan initially was to smash out as many of these as I could to bring the story to its eventual close, but life has caught up to me. Please forgive me.

Still, I am finding time to write wherever I can, and I plan to continue releasing chapters with some frequency up until the end. The grand finale is on its way, I hope you're all ready!

As always, I can't wait to read your reviews, and I do read every single one so please remember to keep sending them in. :)>Keep reviewing and I'll keep writing :) Bye guys!<p>

**Location: New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.
>Timestamp: October 23**rd**** 2552. 16:45hours.**

>Unit ID: Gunnery Sergeant Courtney Smith (Female, 27, 5'10"), Orbital Drop Shock Trooper, 7**th**** Shock Troopers Battalion.**

The weight of Thel'Watamee over her right shoulder was much heftier than the weight of David she had been carrying earlier, but her adrenaline kept her moving. If only this big ass alien could run on his own, then they would already be out of the street and safe.

Courtney's breath was heavy and she found it difficult to see straight with the combination of her movement and Thel's together as they pushed on down the street, back toward the building they emerged from. They turned the corner back down the alley where the door existed that they had previously exited from, but she continued past it. The enemies must have known they were there, or that big brute wouldn't have found them so easily. They needed another spot to hide.

"Whatâ€|" Thel spoke, catching Courtney off guard.

"Save it, you need to save your breath for moving and not giving our position away." She spat. She wanted to hear what he had to say, but she needed to keep her priorities straight. She needed to find a place to go; somewhere they could take a moment to recover and regroup.

Across the street, a small building with a small, narrow back alley behind it. That was perfect. They could recuperate in the building and then move up the back alley toward the spire in the centre of the city. If they could make it to the base of that tower, they could get out of here. She just hoped the others could make it too. Her heart stopped for a fraction of a second in her chest as she thought about what she had just seen; that giant brute running after David and Martinâ€|. She hoped they were alright.

Courtney had to keep her head level. If she didn't keep it together, then she would die with this big ass Sangheili on top of her and that's the last thing she wanted.

They moved to the end of the alley so that she could check the street. Miraculously, the street was empty, despite the noise of their previous encounter. She took the moment she was given to make her move across the road. She stepped spryly, for if she didn't then they were sitting ducks.

Luckily, they made it inside before Thel's weight became too much for her. Courtney slipped on a puddle on the floor, a spot where the building's ceiling had failed to keep the rain from entering, and Thel came crashing down on her. They awkwardly landed on the floor, flapping about like fish out of water. His weight was pushing the air out of her and she couldn't breathe, but because of how she was carrying him, he could not bring himself to his feet. They squirmed awkwardly for a few moments before she wriggled free enough to take a deep breath.

"Why?" She said to herself, exasperated. "Why do I always get to deal with the biggest one?" She used her SMG as a makeshift crutch and pushed herself up from the ground to her feet. She turned to find Thel, still trying his hardest to stand, but wobbling as he did. Regardless of his injury he still pushed himself to his limits. It was almost admirable, if he weren't goofy with his movement.

"Scary female," Thel started, only stopping to take a breath, "Why did you struggle and bring me with you? I am not fit for combat and was told I would be left behind in dire situations." Thel seemed genuinely confused.

Courtney chuckled. "Well," she started, "Aside from the fact that I need someone to cover my ass, you don't really seem that bad. You've made it this far, why die now?" she checked her gun and thought about where they had to go next. Like the previous building, this one also had a door leading into a back alley, however it was blocked by some wreckage where the roof had caved in from the blast of the slip space rupture.

Thel seemed to be ready to move again, so she began to move the obstruction out of their way. Thel came to help, but she stopped him. "No," Courtney started "If you end up tearing that wound open, you won't last long. Just chill out for a bit, I've got this."

"Scary female, if I am not of use I may as well be--"

"Look." She said, dropping some of the debris on the floor beside her and turning to face him. "Call me Courtney; keep that scary female shit up and I'll probably sit you on your ass." She turned back to the wreckage.

"Court-a-nee. I may as well be dead." Thel tried.

Courtney couldn't help but laugh. "Good try. That was cute."

She froze, holding the last piece of material that blocked the way. What did she just say? Where the hell did that come from? She tossed the last piece aside, suddenly frustrated with herself.

"Let's get a move on. The sooner we meet up with the others the better. Don't want you getting killed before we get there." She said, holding her SMG once again.

"Indeed. You would be left to fend for yourself; good luck with that." Thel joked.

Courtney turned back to him, surprised. "You're kidding right? You know I have had more combat experience than your boyfriend right?"

Thel tilted his head like a confused puppy dog. "Boyfriend? What is this?"

Courtney sighed and facepalmed. "Jacob. I have had more combat experience than he has. How well do you feel he can fend for himself?"

Thel was shocked. "You are more experienced in combat than Jacob? How is this possible? You are a female."

Courtney cracked her neck. "Run that by me again?"

Thel was silent.

"Thought so." Courtney turned back toward the door and began to move.

"You truly are scary, Court-a-nee." Thel muttered, following her at a safe distance, should he accidentally say something else that would enrage her.

58. Chapter 58

****58.****

****Location: New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.**

>Timestamp: October 23rd**** 2552. 16:45hours.****

>Unit ID: Sergeant Martin Hamming, (Male, 24, 5'11"), Orbital Drop Shock Trooper, 7th**** Shock Troopers Battalion.****

The sound of his heart pounding was almost deafening. The only thing louder was the gunfire and the heart stopping roar of the gigantic brute behind them. Martin and David had sprinted from the alley, straight across the road and into a continuing alley. David was running in front of Martin, and had turned toward Martin during running. He aimed his SMG back, and blind fired at the brute that was behind them, as to draw his attention toward the pair of them.

"Keep running! Don't stop for anything, okay?" David yelled across to Martin.

Martin had no intention of stopping regardless of orders. He didn't want to die; not here, not yet. He kept his eyes fixed forward on the alley they were running through. His heart began to sink as he saw the alley was coming to a dead end. They needed an exit, something, anything.

Martin spotted a broken window, the glass shattered all over the floor. It was small enough for them, but the brute could not fit through. "Window, right hand, 50 meters!" Martin called to David.

"Looks good, go!" David said, allowing Martin to head through first, while he drew the brute's attention.

Martin took it out wide in front of David, before turning right and diving through the window into the dark room. It was a residential kitchen of some kind. He performed a combat roll across the floor to keep himself ready and moving. He stopped and turned back to look for David.

He came diving through the window, narrowly avoiding the brute's hammer, which collided with the wall beside the window, causing a loud crashing noise and the building to shake. There was no time to take a breath, they had to keep moving.

The brute roared as David leapt to his feet and kept running. The giant beast slammed the wall once more, creating a hole large enough to fit through. Martin could feel his heart in his throat, pounding away, and he couldn't help shake the feeling that this was the end for them. Martin and David sprinted as hard as their bodies would carry them, through the doorway in the kitchen that lead to the back room. The brute began to catch up, but had difficulty fitting through the doorway the pair went through.

Thankfully, the back door was off of its hinges and it provided them a means of escape. The brute was still struggling to fit through the kitchen door they first moved through by the time they were already at the next building over; running down back alleys and taking corners to throw him off of their trail. The brush with death was way too close for comfort for Martin.

"Captain, I think we lost-"

"Keep moving!" David yelled. He sounded almost hysterical.

Martin continued to follow close behind David, running in and out of alleys away from the monster. Eventually they found their way back on the path toward where their meet up point was to be if they were separated. They were still dodging past buildings and trashcans, but they were on the right path. There were several minutes of silence before David spoke.

"That was him." He said, still breathing heavily, his voice still shaky "That was the brute that almost crushed my skull."

Martin thought about what was said earlier amongst the group about the brute. "Cerberus? Are you sure?"

Now that he mentioned it, the armour bore a staggering resemblance to the armour from the description given, and his mohawk did point forward in such a way like they said. Perhaps that was him; the giant, terrifying brute from the stories. No wonder David wouldn't stop running. This brute had brought him dangerously close to death once before, it was doubtful he would so easily let it happen again.

"That thingâ€¦!" David said, as he peered around a corner to check if it was clear. "I'm going to kill that thing, if it's with the last breath I take. I'll make it pay for thinking it could kill me so easily." He moved around the corner and slowly crept up the street.

Martin hated when David was angry like this. He got scary. It was only very rare that he actually became so angry, with his happy-go-lucky lifestyle and attitude towards everything. He always looked on the bright side of things and was constantly trying to take the piss out of something to increase everyone's mood in a situation. But when he was mad, he got dark.

"I'll rip its throat out with my bare hands." He muttered. "I hate brutes."

"The uhâ€¦!" Martin tried to change topics to attempt to bring David back. "The rendezvous point isn't far from here is it? We're headed in the right direction?"

"Hm?... Oh, yeah. It's about 500 meters ahead. Round a couple of corners and dodge through some alleys and we'll be there soon." David suddenly receded back into his normal self, the dark, scary side of him easing away into darkness.

Martin had never been able to pull that off so fast. The one who was normally that good at calming him was Courtney, but with her not around he had to try. He needed David with a level head, or else they might not have been able to make it out of here alive.

They slowly eased their way through another back alley toward their goal. The sooner they could all meet up and get ready to push forward up that tower, the sooner they could get out of here to safety. That is, if getting above the disturbance layer from the blast will actually mean they can contact their command for an evac. This was something that was troubling Martin. If they got up there and they weren't able to get a signal out stillâ€¦ What then?

* * *

><p>Hey everyone!<p>

I'm glad you've read this far! I'd like to take another moment to thank everyone who to this day is still reading my story. Bravo! Pat yourself on the back!

We've come a long way on this journey. Soon enough, it'll all be coming to a close.

Remember to keep reviewing for me! I love reading reviews. I honestly read every single one so please do continue to post them. Even if its something small, I'd still love to hear from you :)

Thanks!

59. Chapter 59

****59.****

****Location: New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.**

>Timestamp: October 23rd**** 2552. 17:02hours.****

**>Unit ID: Lieutenant Jacob Matthews (Male, 25, 5'11"),
Orbital Drop Shock Trooper, 7**th**** Shock Troopers
Battalion.****

Jacob peered up over the windowsill. He was crouched down against the wall, peering over the corner to get a visual on the base of the tower. This meant he was as well hidden as he could be, allowing the smallest amount of visual the enemies could get on him as he scouted the area ahead. They were in the building that they set as their rendezvous, and Shay'est stayed crouched behind Jacob, watching the door in case a patrol decided to walk past on a whim; however their patterns seemed to be set on guarding the tower.

Across from the view Jacob had was the tower. It was a good 500m away, and in between them and the tower stood 2 brute guards, a patrol that walked past of 3 jackals with shields and 4 grunts. The

patrol wasn't much of a problem, but in the time it would take them to dispatch the patrol, the brutes would lay down some fire on them. Between the patrols and Jacob and Shay'est was a main road that encircled the tower. It had a few cars and other overturned vehicles sitting stationary along it at different intervals. Jacob took note that any civilians that had survived the blast and were in their cars were killed by the covenant units that were now guarding the tower; helpless. Pointless. Pointless waste of life.

Jacob switched on his HUD inside of his helmet, which scanned across the area, sending a yellow pulse of light across the surroundings to better allow for a visual of the area, instead of just the silhouettes. Doing this also marked any enemies in his visor and painted them red for him. This way he could see any that he might have missed, like the sniper that was waltzing past a couple of storeys up the tower, who Jacob almost didn't even see with the visual aid; all he saw was a spot of red which made him do a double take.

He leant back against the wall, away from the windowsill, and turned back to face Shay'est, who was holding her carbine rifle. His eyes rolled down her torso to examine the rifle. He then looked back up and asked her "Hey, how good are you a shot with that thing at long range?"

Shay'est scoffed, looking almost offended. "Do not underestimate my marksmanship. I am probably a better shot than you are."

He looked at her in silence for a moment.

"â€| Probably?" she added.

He remained silent.

"Maybe not, but I can take a good shot over a distance without the use of a scope." She rolled her mandibles into a pout.

"Good. I may need you to do that. There is a sniper on the second floor up, patrolling across this side of the tower. This leads me to believe that there may be one on all four sides of it. This means-

"If we approach the tower and attempt to defeat these opponents, the other snipers would likely come around and pick us off." Shay'est finished, almost reading his thoughts.

"Correct. One of our best approaches might be a distraction of sorts from the far side, but that would mean going all the way around and coming back. Working that all out would be a nightmare, and it would likely mean someone would be left behind at the bottom of the tower to fend for themselves while we all climb. And I'm not okay with leaving anyone behind." Jacob thought for a few moments while Shay'est processed what he was saying. "Perhaps," he started again. "If we-

A creak grabbed his attention from the back of the building, the other door that lead to the alleyway out back had opened, and Jacob aimed his SMG. He glanced at Shay'est to see if she was prepared, to find she was also ready, her rifle fixed on the doorway. The door was wide open, but nobody appeared to be there. Jacob took a few crouched

steps toward the door, hoping to catch any enemies off guard.

Around the corner, through the doorway peered Courtney, aiming her rifle inside quickly, instantly fixed on Shay'est out of instinct. "Friendly." She said.

Jacob's heart had skipped a beat. "Jesus, Courts. I about shit myself." He lowered his rifle as she lowered hers.

"Sorry about that, didn't want to use radio comms in case they were listening." She said.

Jacob nodded and approached her. Thel'Watamee hobbled around the corner, holding Courtney's shoulder for support. Jacob tucked his rifle away behind him and offered to help but Thel's pride forced him to hold a hand up to deny him.

"No. I can accept the help of one, but if I were to accept help from two of you at once I would be too ashamed." He said, partially in a joking tone, but Jacob knew he was also partly being true.

"Stubborn ass." He laughed. "Seen the others?" He turned to Courtney, suddenly realizing that it was only the two of them, and David and Martin were nowhere to be seen.

"Probably not far off. They had to shake that gorilla off of their tails so they'd probably be taking the long way around." Courtney said, helping Thel inside and helping him to rest against a wall. He seemed to be regaining energy, but at the same time he wasn't exactly able to run on his own. With the amount of blood he'd lost it was remarkable he had made it this far. Stubborn ass indeed.

Jacob nodded, confirming he understood Courtney and began to give her the brief on what their next situation looked like. They began to brainstorm about the idea of a distraction, however Jacob was still harbouring mixed feelings about the idea.

"If we do that," Courtney said "It would have to be someone who didn't mind not making it out of here." She almost turned to look at Thel, but stopped herself. "And I know that-"

"No." Jacob said straight out. "I'm not sacrificing anyone to ensure the rest of us make it. We all need to get through this to the top, no matter what. If there's an option to keep everyone together I'll take it over anything else." He insisted.

"Alright," Courtney replied, "But if the shit hits the fan and we have to charge through this, it isn't likely we'll all be safe."

60. Chapter 60

****60.****

****Location: New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.**

>Timestamp: October 23*rd**** 2552. 17:12hours.****

>Unit ID: Shay'est (Female, 6'1") Sangheili, Domo recruit.

"Heads up, friendlies coming in!" the familiar voice called from the back door; the same door Courtney and Thel'Watamee had just recently emerged from. David and Martin wandered into the room, observing their surroundings. David walked straight to Jacob and asked for an update on the rest of the plan.

Shay'est was concerned about Thel'Watamee. The elite warrior was reduced to almost a cripple. Their Sangheili species had much better regenerative powers than human beings, so their wounds healed up much quicker. Shay'est felt the scar on her side from the wound she had sustained days ago. At this point in time she couldn't quite remember what she had received it from, but it didn't matter.

Thel'Watamee's wound had come from a brute spiker. These weapons were brutal and their wounds did not heal up easily. They were designed as a piercing projectile weapon that caused as much traumatic damage as possible. Thel was lucky to have survived one that pierced his lung, and luckier still that his lung had not collapsed as a result, or else he would have died a long time ago.

"You'll never guess what we found back there." Martin said, somewhat shaken up, still catching his breath from their daring escape.

"What was it?" Jacob asked, still conversing with David, but only just turning his attention to Martin.

"Bodies." David said, grimly. He looked over to Shay'est and Thel, before returning his gaze to Jacob. "Sangheili. Many. They were all tossed together under a catwalk." He looked down.

Shay'est's heart sank. She probably knew some of the elites they were speaking about; just as Thel probably knew some too. As a swordsman like him, he would be expected to know many other swordsmen and warriors. Still, she had never heard of anything like it happening before in combat.

"Two guesses who." David said.

"Cerberusâ€|" Jacob suggested, looking back toward the window, of which they were out of view. "I wonder if he's reached the tower by now looking for usâ€|" He kept staring at the window, off in his own little world.

Cerberusâ€| That giant, terrifying brute. Shay'est was rattled to her core when he attacked them. He caught them completely off guard, and he was unlike any brute she had ever seen before.

"So what's the plan then?" David asked, ready to get a move on again. The sooner he could get his hands on Cerberus, the better.

"Well like I said, we need a distraction to make this easyâ€|" Jacob said.

"I do not mind staying behind."

The group all stopped and looked at each other, then all turned their attention to Thel, it was he who spoke.

"What?" Jacob said, astounded. "What did you say?"

"I do not-

"No. Idiot." Jacob said. "That's not how we work. We aren't leaving you behind. If you stay behind here then all that we worked for to bring your heavy ass with us was for nothing." He leaned down toward him, holding his hand up to hide his next whisper from the others. "And, if you made Courtney carry you down here for you to stay behind, she'll be really pissed."

They both looked at Courtney, who had her arms crossed, tapping her left foot. Thel'Watamee gulped.

"No," Jacob repeated. "We aren't leaving you â€" or anyone â€" behind." He observed each member of their team, looking them up and down, assessing their ability to fight. A forward push is likely their best approach at this point.

"Shay'est." Jacob said, nodding at her.

His authoritative words almost startled her. "Yes."

"You're a good shot? Then I want you to bring down the snipers up top as we move up, so that we don't get picked off in our charge. You hang at the back of the party."

"I understand. I will do my best." She psyched herself up. Time to really show her usefulness to Jacob.

"Thel, you're in no real condition to fightâ€|" He started, cocking his head to one side, examining him, his hands on his hips.

Thel scoffed and waved a hand at him. "Silence. Do not insult me. I will fight as well as any of you." He grumpily said.

"Well, that's good to hear; because you're heading the charge." He said.

Thel looked up, concerned. "Leading the charge?"

"Yes. I need you to take down the first two jackals walking past. The Kig-Yar. They have shields that will deflect all of our bullets. I need you to bring their shields down with your plasma weapons so that we can do some damage and waste that patrol."

Thel'Watamee looked down at his plasma rifle, then looked back to Jacob and gave a confirming nod.

"Good. David and Martin, we're the artillery. Keep an eye on your ammo, and take down as many as you can without running dry. We don't know how many will be inside that tower, and we need to get through to the top, so let's not screw ourselves here." Jacob thought about what was still to come.

"Gotcha, sounds like a plan to me. You painted the enemies out there?" Martin asked.

"Yep, I'll send you the info now." Jacob nodded, touching the side of his helmet, and messing with the in-built dial on the side.

The other two marines did the same, touching the side of their helmet. "Check." Each of them said, confirming they received the info, and then looked out toward the enemies. Their heads-up-displays showed the glowing red outlines of enemies that were behind walls and other cover after they had been tagged.

"What about those two guards? They're holding spears, and I doubt they'd just let us stroll past." David joked.

"Well, that's the plan. When we get to them, we feed them a grenade each, and then simply waltz past." Jacob said. Shay'est could feel his grin from behind his helmet.

The group looked at each other and made sure they all knew their roles, then began to all check their weapons and ensure they were all ready to go. If they were going to do this, they had to do it right. A head on charge against a covenant barricade was one thing, but one managed by brutes will be a much more dangerous challenge.

* * *

><p>Hey there ladies and gentlemen! :)<p>

I realize the last couple of chapters have been somewhat short, but I'll be making up for that with the next few. They'll certainly be very interesting.

Fingers crossed I keep finding time to write.

>This chapter was supposed to go up a couple of days ago, but FanFiction has been having some server issues. Thankfully they've been fixed now and I'm going to keep uploading.<p>

Remember to keep reviewing and I'll keep writing! :)

61. Chapter 61

61.

**Location: New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.

>Timestamp: October 23**rd**** 2552. 17:18hours.**

>Unit ID: Shay'est (Female, 6'1") Sangheili, Domo recruit.

Shay'est bent her right leg and crouched down a few feet from the window sill. She was ready to take down the snipers as soon as the others make their move. She took aim and looked over to Jacob, who was waiting to move through the door he and Shay'est had previously come in through. With a nod, he was off, everyone following suite behind him.

They all stayed low, hiding down behind the cars as they made their way up toward the base of the tower. A patrol of Jackals was moving ever closer from their right, meaning if they were going to bust out and make a move, it was now.

Thel'Watamee nodded to Jacob, who in turn nodded back. Thel pushed his legs down against the road, forcing his body up, with his plasma rifle in hand. He pulled the trigger and let a barrage of plasma fly

toward the small patrol, causing burns, confusion and panic. The ODS troops all followed his example, standing all at once and hailing fire down on the patrol with their SMGs. It only took a few moments before the patrol members were all dead.

Shay'est took advantage of the confusion, taking aim on the jackal snipers a couple of floors above ground and firing her carbine rifle at them. The first one went down with one shot, a green flash and its brain was blown out of the back of its skull. The second one caught a glimpse of this happening and took cover; however Jackals aren't the smartest species in the galaxy. Moments later the same Jackal sniper peeked up over the wall, looking around for where the carbine shot could have come from. Shay'est again, took aim and put a round through its skull.

With the initial two snipers down, Shay'est was now free to move through the door and join the others. If they were going to make this push for the roof, they had to make it fast if they were going to avoid coming into contact with Cerberus again. She ran around the doorway and dove behind the cars. When she peered up over the bonnet of the sedan she was crouched behind, she saw the two brutes that were guarding the door were now moving toward them at a frightening pace.

The others had also taken notice of this and were prepared for this situation. Jacob and Martin each pulled a frag grenade from their belt and hurled them toward the brutes. The grenades bounced once in front of each brute and then blew up right on top of them. The blast took down their shields and left them stunned and vulnerable. The marines didn't give them a chance to recover; David and Courtney continued their SMG fire and riddled the beasts with bullets until they flopped, lifelessly to the ground.

With the guards on this side of the tower all dead, now was their chance to get inside. The group moved as a complete unit straight for the door, sliding over car bonnets and sprinting as fast as they could. Shay'est in the meantime, took care with her movements and continued to watch the level the snipers were on. It was just as well she did, as two more snipers ran around from either side of the tower to check up on the ruckus. She took a breath and fired at them, one round through the skull of the first one, but the second one she misfired, putting a round in its chest first, throwing it off and causing the Jackal to stagger, before putting another round in its torso, which brought it to the ground.

The team waited for Shay'est before they tried to enter the building. Once she joined them, David pushed against the handles, finding the door wouldn't budge. He looked down, confused, before he found that there was a shackle of some kind connecting the handles on the inside of the door, connected by some sort of plasma beam that held the door firmly shut. He tugged at the doors wildly a couple of times before turning around to the group.

"No good, its locked." He frowned.

"_Shit!_ What do we do now?" Jacob roared, flustered and angry.

Thel'Watamee began to walk back toward the cars, angrily muttering to himself. The others looked at him before returning to speaking to

each other.

"What will we do now?" Shay'est asked.

"Is there another way around?" Courtney suggested.

"We can't afford to take on another heap of guards like that; I've just run out of ammunition for my SMG." Jacob said, taking the gun off his shoulder and tossing it to the ground.

A loud pounding roared past them and they turned to see a deep blue blur dash past them, throwing itself at the glass door. Thel tossed himself at the door and burst through it, shattering the glass all over the place. He took a moment to push himself up off of the floor before turning back to face them. "It was glass, are you humans all simple?" he shook his head and began to brush the remaining glass chips off of his armour.

The ODS'Ts looked at one another for a few seconds, attempting to collectively understand what had just happened, before David finally said "Good enough for me," and followed Thel'Watamee through the entrance.

The interior of the building was dark, the only light peering in through the deeply tinted windows. There were only a few emergency lights functioning and the television sets were all dead. The reason they had chosen this tower was because it broke the disruption level, but another reason was that as the main capital building it had its own heavily functioning backup generators. The generators successfully powered the emergency lights, lifts and communication relays. This meant they could use the tower's communication antenna to have a better chance of contacting their superiors.

The interior of the building was empty, although they could still hear the units moving around outside. They didn't take any time to offer the enemies a good shot at them; the group ran for the elevator, pressed the button to call it and jumped into the lift as soon as the doors opened.

* * *

><p>Hey everyone!<p>

Sorry about the big hiatus I've been on. Life's been very busy and very tricky lately. I've been getting quite sick the last few weeks too, but trying to fight past it all.

>Anyway, I'm very close to the grand finale, so I'm going to try and sit myself down more often to work on the story at a better pace, but then again life is tricky and has a tendency to throw curve-balls. Because of this I don't want to make any promises but I will still attempt to see what I can do.<p>

Also I'd like to remind you all that I do read every single review that comes through and it helps motivate me to keep writing, so please by all means do keep writing reviews for the story. It shows how much you enjoy the story and it shows me how much you want to read more, so please please please do keep writing those reviews. Even if its a quick "hey keep it up." I read everything and every word counts. :) Thanks guys.

I also wanted to once again thank you all for being such an amazing reader base. I've seen so many other stories that have had a reception full of flamers and people hating on the writer and audience and I wanted to extend my sincerest gratitude to you all for being better people than that. Thank you again.

Anyway, now that that's all out of the way, I will get back to writing and I can't wait to read your reviews. :)

>Regards,
Nick.

62. Chapter 62

****62.****

****Location: New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.**

>Timestamp: October 23rd**** 2552. 17:32hours.****

>Unit ID: Shay'est (Female, 6'1") Sangheili, Domo recruit.

The doors slowly rolled closed in front of them and the elevator began to move upwards. Shay'est felt her stomach slowly droop down inside of her as the small numbered buttons began to light up one by one as they climbed floors.

The elevator music provided a much different atmosphere from what the group had just emerged from; from the battle and killing of brutes and a team of Jackals, to calm, soft jingles silently humming in the background. Apart from the music there was hardly a sound; even the elevator's movement was silent. Everyone silently inspected their weapons and looked around. David bent his head left and right, stretching his neck muscles. Suddenly, almost frighteningly, Thel'Watamee sneezed, and rubbed his hand against his face where his nose should be.

Martin turned to Thel and looked him in the face. "Hm. I didn't know you could sneeze."

Thel looked back to him and shrugged, and then the group returned to silence while Martin pondered. He finalized the moment with another "Hm."

It was only once they reached about floor 12 that Jacob noticed something that concerned him. The small minimap on his heads up display, which showed the close proximity around him and his relativity to tagged objects or enemies, began to fizzle and become static. He turned to Martin and tapped the side of his helmet. Martin nodded back to him and said "Yeah I see it too. I don't know what's causing it. Could be that we're nearing that cloud line."

Shay'est tapped Jacob on the shoulder, gaining his attention. He turned to look at her and she tilted her head, physically asking what was wrong. Jacob pointed to his helmet and said "My minimap and heads up display is playing up. It's showing a heap of static and I can't get a signal on anything." He looked down, submerging himself in thought about what could be causing it.

A small ding caught the attention of everyone when they hit the 30th

floor. They all noticed the elevator begin to slow down to a stop when they reached floor 35. They all pulled their weapons up and prepared themselves for the door to open. The moment the doors slid open they saw the one thing they didn't want to see. The elevator door opened to reveal a large platform, almost like a landing platform, that jutted out of the side of the building. Standing in the middle of the platform was the terrifying figure of Cerberus, holding something in his right hand that was faintly glowing red.

One by one the team filtered out of the lift, their weapons trained on the brute. He held his gravity hammer in his left hand, standing it up beside him and a giant grin on his big monkey face.

"What are you smiling about, ugly?" David asked, "You have a whole team of us aiming our weapons at you. You haven't got shit to be happy about."

The brute heftily chuckled before raising the red glowing metal orb that was in his right hand. "This Jammer is stopping any plan you may have of calling reinforcements. You are out of luck, humans. To add to this, even if you all try to bring me down, I have called for some backup of my own. By the time you defeat me you will be overrun with every unit in this part of the city." He began a weighty laugh.

Martin and Jacob looked at each other before Jacob asked "Well, that legit?"

Martin nodded, grimly. "Yeah, that's probably about right. That thing's why our minimaps are playing up and that's stopping us from calling for help, even with the tower's comm relay."

Jacob looked back to the brute, his pistol the only weapon he had left. "On the roof we're all set though, right biggun?" he called to the brute.

The brute grinned again. "No you are not humans, there are easily 10 units up there. Brutes and jackals all ready to tear you apart as soon as you reach the roof."

Jacob turned back to David and looked at him. David knew exactly what he was thinking.

"No Jacob, you're not doing that."

"See any other choice? We don't have time to bring him down together, destroy the jammer and then head up to the roof." Jacob turned to Thel'Watamee. "Take her, don't let her get back out." He pointed at Shay'est, knowing full well as soon as she realized what he was planning she would stop him.

"What is happening?" Shay'est asked, as Thel began to pull her back toward the elevator. The rest of the team slowly began to back up.

"Good luck. If you do manage to break that thing we'll call for help right away and then come back down to get you." Courtney said, stepping toward him and putting an arm around him. "Don't die. You still owe me for that bet."

"What bet?" Jacob chuckled. She had clearly made up some sort of memory where he owed her money.

"Just don't die." She said, punching him in the arm and jogging back toward the elevator.

Shay'est caught on to what was happening and began to struggle. She wriggled an arm free and reached out toward Jacob, trying to free herself from Thel'Watamee's grip. He saw she would eventually get free so Jacob lifted his pistol, aimed it toward them and fired at the control panel beside the lift. Once the electronics were compromised the lift hissed shut and they were gone.

Jacob turned back toward the brute he was now alone with, his pistol still drawn. "Just us." He said, unloading the clip that was in his gun and loading a new one in.

"You are brave human. Either that or completely idiotic." The brute locked the jammer onto his belt and lifted his hammer up, now holding it in both hands. "I still have not decided which yet."

Jacob chuckled, locking the hammer on the top of his pistol back into place. "You and me both, ugly."

Jacob knew that this battle would use up all of his good luck for the rest of his life, so he took a moment to wish good luck to Shay'est and the others. He didn't get a chance to say goodbye and could only hope that the rest of them made it to the roof and call for help safely.

* * *

><p>Hey guys n gals!<p>

This particular chapter has been in the plans for quite some time now, but how exactly it planned out was something I have been deep in thought in for ages. I have worked on so many different scenarios and ways this chapter went through but, this was the winner.

I hope you're all ready for the big chapters coming up. Lots of writing and planning on my plate but I'll try and get it all worked out. Hopefully you'll really enjoy how this all goes. Many action. Such combat. So awesome. Wow.

Anyway, thanks for reading and remember to leave a quick review, whether it be for just this chapter or the story or your experience with the journey in general.

Many thanks and I eagerly await your reviews. :)

63. Chapter 63

63.

**Location: New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.

>Timestamp: October 23***rd**** 2552. 17:45hours.**

>Unit ID: Shay'est (Female, 6'1") Sangheili, Domo

recruit.

Shay'est's arm remained outstretched, reaching desperately for the door, even though it had already shut and the elevator was already starting to move. She struggled and pushed against Thel'Watamee's grip, kicking and twisting as much as she could. She refused to accept they had left him there to die.

"We must go back! We cannot leave Jacob there to fight alone!" She cried, still flailing like a child throwing a tantrum.

"I am sorry, Shay'est." Thel said, sombrely "There was no other option, and Jacob made it clear that this was the course of action that gave us the best chance of survival."

Shay'est began to lose energy, slowing her flailing and beginning to sob. Tears began to sting her eyes and roll down her face.

"If he does not make it up to the top of the tower with us," Thel continued, "Then he will have died the death of a hero. Legends from our history would be jealous of his passing."

Thel slowly released Shay'est from his grip as she sunk to the floor, on all fours. She looked down and continued to cry. She couldn't stop the tears. She didn't want to stop the tears. It wasn't fair.

"Shay'est." Martin started. "If I may," he crouched down beside her, placing one hand on her back. "If any one of us could do this and somehow pull it off, it would be Jacob. He is without a doubt one of the most skilled people in our squad, and I doubt a single brute is going to bring him down, regardless of if that brute is so important in the covenant army."

Shay'est looked up at Martin, hopefully, tears still welling in her eyes. "Do you mean that?"

Martin nodded. "Keep a hold of your hope; you may still need it yet."

Shay'est took a moment before standing back up and inspecting her gun. They were not through this yet, and Jacob needed her to be on her game. She had to make it to the top and clear a landing zone for extraction. She had to do it for him.

She looked up to the floor lights; blinking one by one, in ascending order. The lift drew closer and closer to the roof, and further and further away from Jacob. Shay'est tried her best to keep him out of her mind, but nothing would work. She just had to deal with the fact that she's going to be scared until he returns. If he returns.

**Location: New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.
>Timestamp: October 23***rd**** 2552. 17:45hours.**

>Unit ID: Lieutenant Jacob Matthews (Male, 25, 5'11"),
Orbital Drop Shock Trooper, 7***th**** Shock Troopers
Battalion.**

Jacob stood facing Cerberus, his back facing the lift the others had

just escaped in. Across the platform from him stood the giant brute, clad in crimson armour, wielding his Gravity Hammer and looking menacing. The brute crouched down and stretched one leg back, preparing to launch himself at Jacob.

Jacob warmed his fingers up, clutching his pistol in his left hand. With his right hand he drew his knife from its sheathe. He took a breath of the cold, thin air and felt it chill his lungs. Jacob didn't have to _defeat_ Cerberus, he just had to destroy the Jamming device, then the others could call in backup and the cavalry could do the rest. Once the UNSC knew they still had units on the ground in need of extraction, they would stop at nothing to retrieve them.

The two warriors stared each other down for a few moments, strategizing silently in their heads exactly how the fight would play out. Of course, it would go according to neither of their expectations.

The air between the two of them was tense; almost thick with suspense. Neither wanted to make the first move, because then the opponent could plan around it. The intensity rose as Jacob turned right to stand side-on toward the brute. If he was going to pull this off, he had to be sure he was ready, both mentally and physically.

* * *

><p>Hi everyone!<p>

Sorry I haven't posted in such a long time and left you with such a cliffhanger, but I've been incredibly busy. I've had exams for the past month and have only just had time to sit myself down and start writing. I know I upset some people by leaving things on such a cliffhanger with the last chapter, and I am very sorry about that, but a lot of stuff came up in my life that I had to deal with. I hope you understand.

Also, I would like to apologize for this chapter being so short, but I figured the next chapter deserved a full, long chapter all to itself. So there's something to make up for it.

Thanks for reading and I look forward to seeing your reviews!
:)

64. Chapter 64

****64.****

****Location: New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.**

>Timestamp: October 23rd**** 2552. 17:46hours.****

**>Unit ID: Lieutenant Jacob Matthews (Male, 25, 5'11"),
Orbital Drop Shock Trooper, 7**th**** Shock Troopers
Battalion.****

Cerberus blew hot air out of his nose, similar to the way a boar would if enraged, and pushed off the ground with his forward leg; launching himself like a rocket toward Jacob, and running full speed across the landing pad toward him. The brute held its hammer back over its shoulder as it charged toward Jacob at an alarming

speed.

Jacob lifted his pistol and fired three shots, one after the other. Each shot hit the brute, but ricocheted off, turning the brute a bright tint of blue and bringing about a swirling pattern over its body. The brute was using shields.

"_Shit."_ Jacob said as the brute drew close enough to swing its hammer.

Cerberus brought his hammer down on top of Jacob, the air swirling around it as it swung down toward the ODST's head. Jacob rolled his torso back and kicked off the ground, doing a combat roll backward, out of the way of the hammer. The front of the hammer struck the ground with an almighty _boom_, sending a blue shockwave in the form of a dome outward for a foot around it.

Jacob quickly sprung back up to his feet, expecting the brute to need to recover. However, Cerberus was not to be underestimated. The brute pulled the hammer out of the crater it had formed in the landing pad, and swung it around toward Jacob, the back end facing him. The bladed end of the hammer came at him with a loud _woosh_, and Jacob could do little to stop it. He pulled his knife up toward his chest, and held it out, putting both hands behind the side of the blade. The hammer collided with his knife and the force transferred through Jacob down to the ground as he slid in an arc around the brute, kicking up dust until he came to a stop.

Jacob rolled to the right, away from the brute, so that they had now traded places from the beginning of their fight. The brute didn't allow Jacob a moment to recover. Cerberus charged once again right toward Jacob, bringing the hammer up over his head and down on top of him again. Jacob stepped back once, so that the hammer was going to land in front of him.

Time almost slowed down for Jacob, the adrenaline was surging through his brain and he could see everything playing out in front of him. The brute brought the hammer down at Jacob's feet, as the marine stepped up off of the floor. His timing had to be perfect; down to the millisecond. Just as the hammer connected with the ground, Jacob stepped on top of it and jumped forward toward the brute's right shoulder. The gravity hammer's collision with the ground caused another blue wave of gravity distortion to roll out around the head of the hammer, forcing Jacob forward and over the brute's shoulder. The blast gave him just the perfect amount of lift to just miss the brute's muscular joint and roll over his back.

Jacob took the opportunity he had been given. The brute still had shields up, which protected it from projectiles like bullets, but it did not protect it from melee attacks. Jacob thrust his knife into the back of the brute's shoulder, sliding it between two of the brute's plates of armour. The giant behemoth roared in pain as the blade sunk into its back. Cerberus twisted his body faster than Jacob had anticipated, almost making him release his knife. Jacob was exposed, laying sideways in the air as the brute send its left fist flying toward him. Cerberus punched Jacob dead in the stomach, and sent him rolling back across the landing pad.

Jacob rolled onto his back and tried to catch his breath. The force of the punch had caused his helmet's heads-up-display to fizzle

slightly, and Jacob could only manage a short wheeze before taking a quick breath. Cerberus pulled his hammer up out of the ground and walked toward Jacob, who was still lying on his back. The punch had knocked Jacob's pistol from his hand and sent it skidding across the ground.

Jacob looked down to see the brute hulking toward him. He tried to sit up but the muscles in his body were seizing up from the contact the brute had made. The knife was still planted in the brute's back, and Jacob could see it had taken its toll on Cerberus. His shields were down, causing an electrical discharge of sparks and energy to roll over the brute's body, popping up here and there around his torso and over his limbs. Jacob searched behind him with his arm, desperately trying to find something to clobber the brute with.

"You put up a good fight, human. It is a shame it couldn't continue any longer." Cerberus stood over Jacob, and picked him up with his right arm, holding the tiny human by the throat and lifting him up to meet the brute at eye level. The giant brute blew hot air from its nose again like a boar, and brought Jacob in closer. Cerberus stepped toward the edge of the landing pad and held Jacob over the edge. This was it; this was how he was going to go out.

"Any final words, human?" The brute grinned as it stared at Jacob's visor, trying to catch its breath. His armour was still sparking and sending electrical surges over itself as the shields attempted to recover, but could not due to the knife that was still firmly wedged into Cerberus' back.

"I hopeâ€¦" Jacob tried to speak, but the brute's fist held his throat too tightly. Cerberus graciously loosened his grip on Jacob, just enough so he could speak. The brute brought him in closely to hear his small voice.

"Come again?"

"I hopeâ€¦ You're hungry." Jacob said, his hands behind his back pulling a pin on a frag grenade. Cerberus had no time to react. Jacob released the lever on the grenade and shoved his fist down Cerberus' throat. His arm went almost elbow deep in the brute's mouth.

Cerberus released Jacob from his grip, dropping him down over the edge of the landing platform. Jacob dropped, feet first, like he did when he first dropped down to the surface of the planet in his drop pod.

65. Chapter 65

****65.****

****Location:** New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.
>Timestamp: October 23***rd**** 2552. 17:50hours.**

>Unit ID: Lieutenant Jacob Matthews (Male, 25, 5'11"),
Orbital Drop Shock Trooper, 7***th**** Shock Troopers
Battalion.**

Jacob thought about how he had first joined the UNSC; when his cousin

had passed away after receiving a mortal wound in combat, while fighting against the insurrectionists back home on Earth. He thought about his time down here on the battlefield in the big city; fighting against the covenant, fighting with the covenant.

This led him to think about Shay'est. How she was now on her way up to the top floor of this building. How she was probably thinking about him, worrying about if they'll see each other again, just as he was.

No.

Jacob threw his arms forward and caught the side of the landing platform. He couldn't die yet. She needed him and he needed her. He had to make sure that the Jamming device was going to be destroyed, so that they could call for extraction.

Jacob pulled himself up and looked forward across the platform. Cerberus took a few steps backward, clutching at his throat and looking down at Jacob for a couple of seconds. However, once the grenade's lever had been released, it was only a matter of time.

Cerberus' head exploded, pieces flying everywhere. His neck followed suite and tore apart, as did the top half of his torso, pieces of armour and body parts went spiralling and soaring through the air, skidding across the top of the platform and flying over the edge. His arms flopped across the floor, rolling in opposite directions. The bottom half of Cerberus' body dropped to its knees, and slumped onto its side.

"You put up a good fight too." Jacob strained to say as he pulled himself up over the ledge so he was no longer dangling over the thousand foot drop. He rolled toward the centre of the platform, so he was now lying beside the dismembered body. Bits and pieces were on the ground around him but he didn't care. He did it. He survived. He beat Cerberus.

Jacob rolled his head to the left, looking at the waist of the bottom half of the brute. Still attached to the belt was the Jamming device, still glowing red, just within his reach. Jacob reached out with his left hand and pulled it free from the body, causing it to drop that extra bit and make a stomach turning squelching sound. He held the jamming device above his head, desensitized to the body parts lying everywhere around him, not paying any mind to the blood of his enemy dripping from the glowing red orb onto his chest plate.

Jacob tossed the jamming device over the ledge, sending it plummeting into the abyss of cold air down below. He saw his minimap slowly begin to lose the static effect that blocked it. Jacob took a deep breath and sighed. "I did it guys. The rest is on you. I'll join you soon." He said, slowly starting to sit up.

He couldn't go yet. There was something he had to find first.

**Location: New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.
>Timestamp: October 23***rd**** 2552. 17:51hours.**

>Unit ID: Shay'est (Female, 6'1") Sangheili, Domo

recruit.

The elevator reached the top floor. The lift rang out a comical _ding_ as they reached their destination. The doors rolled open to reveal two anti-aircraft cannons on the opposite side of the floor, spaced apart from each other so they could rotate freely. In front of the lift stood two waist high walls that curved around the top of the building, but left a gap in the centre, in front of the lift, almost like a doorway. Standing in the centre of the platform was the radio tower, but it was surrounded by covenant troops. There were plenty of grunts, jackals and two brutes all waiting for the team's arrival, almost like they were expecting them.

The squad charged forward, diving down behind the walls to avoid being shot to pieces. Plasma fire rolled overhead and planted itself in the wall around the lift they came in through. David lifted his SMG and blind fired over the wall. There were enough enemy units scattered there that he was bound to at least take down a few.

Martin and Courtney followed suite, Courtney firing over the top like David and Martin firing around the side of the wall, through the passageway. Shay'est and Thel'Watamee were taught never to blindfire, and always look where they were shooting, but in this case, they looked at one another, shrugged, and began to follow the example of the ODS'T's. They fired their weapons over the top of the wall until the fire coming back at them began to slow down.

Once the return fire was small enough, they stood up and began to more accurately take down their enemies. David placed his right hand on the wall and pulled his legs over the top of it, holding his SMG in his left hand. David focused his fire on the first thing he saw, which was one of the brutes. He riddled the big brute with bullets, causing the brute to stumble back and roll over the waist-high wall, dead.

The two turrets turned to face the attackers, but they would not fire unless locked onto an aircraft. The two grunts that were operating the turrets jumped out and lifted their plasma pistols. The squad had successfully dispatched all of their opponents apart from the two grunts that were operating the turrets.

The grunts looked at the squad of death machines, looked back at each other, threw their arms in the air and ran toward the edge of the building, going for a final flight before death.

Martin looked down at this minimap in his heads-up-display to see the red blips that were the grunts disappear from his radar. "Heyâ€¦|" He suddenly realized "Hey, guys! My map is working! He did it; it's not being jammed anymore!"

Shay'est's mind immediately wandered to what could have happened to Jacob. Did he make it? Is he alive still? Did they go down together? Would she ever see him again?

**Location: New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.
>Timestamp: October 23*>rd**** 2552. 18:02hours.**

>Unit ID: Shay'est (Female, 6'1") Sangheili, Domo recruit.

"What are we waiting for?" Courtney said, "Martin, get that radio going. Get us out of here."

"On it," he said, crouching down in front of the control panel of the radio tower. "Give me a few minutes. I'll get a message out to the fleet up above."

"Courtney, you stay here and look after Martin. Biggun'," David nodded at Thel "You stay here too. Shay'est and I will go down and make sure Jacob makes it up okay."

Thel'Watamee looked at David and Shay'est before nodding, accepting his duty. Courtney walked the pair of them over to the elevator they came in through. "Be careful, guys. We'll see you back up here soon. If Martin finishes getting that message out and gets a response back in time we'll come join you down on the platform. That's where we'll be getting picked up from, providing that nutcase down there didn't already destroy it." She joked.

David nodded. "Roger. See you again soon." The two of them stepped into the lift and turned back around to face the entrance. Courtney had sat herself down on the waist high wall, and was facing the entrance, ready for any covenant backup to come stumbling through the door to try and bring them down.

"Do you think he is alright?" Shay'est asked David as the doors of the elevator hissed shut.

David scoffed. "Yeah, like he'd get taken down by a monkey like that. I think he'll be alright." He picked up his pace, not entirely believing his own response. "Still, we should hurry and make sure he's alright."

They soon reached their floor and the doors half-opened. They had to pull the door open the rest of the way, and when they did they were shocked to see bits of brute all over the platform, blood and body pieces littering the floor. Standing in the centre of the platform was Jacob, clutching his ribs with his left arm but lifting his knife up above his head.

"Hah! Found you, you little bastard." He wiped the blood off on his leg and slid the blade back into it's sheathe. He then turned toward the others. "Oh, hey guys. Did you get that signal going?"

They stood in the doorway, speechless for a few moments before David finally spoke. "Jesus a bit of overkill don't you think buddy?"

Jacob looked down and saw the mess he had made. "Ohâ€¦ Nah not really. Unh-" he clutched his ribs tighter with his arm and recoiled inwards. The others came rushing to his aid and stood on either side of him. "I think the big bastard busted a couple of my ribs before I got rid of himâ€¦"

"You'll heal," David said, looking back up to Shay'est. "But right now we need to let the others know you're okay. I'll go fetch them and bring them down here. Shay'est can you watch him 'til then?"

She nodded and helped Jacob begin to sit down. "Hurry back."

David nodded and went for the lift. Soon after that, he was gone, leaving Shay'est and Jacob alone for the first time since before they began their assault on the tower.

"How did things go up top?" Jacob asked.

Shay'est stayed silent. Jacob wasn't sure she heard him.

"How did-"

"Do notâ€¦" she started, her voice shaky. "Do not EVER do that again!" She yelled at him.

Jacob thought his eardrum was about to burst. She was close enough to him as it was without yelling. Turns out a Sangheili can cast their voice pretty well.

"I thought I was never going to see you again! How dare you make a decision like that to sacrifice yourself and not ask my permission first!" She continued to shout.

Jacob wasn't sure quite how to react. At first he was a bit frightened but then began to smile. "So, you _do_ care." He joked.

Shay'est began to go her blushing shade of bright purple. She looked away, still holding him. "Iâ€¦ Was scared."

Jacob laughed and took a deep breath. "Sorry, girl." He looked up at the sky, the clouds passing by. "You can't get rid of me that easily. I think I'll be sticking around for a while." He smiled.

Shay'est sighed and returned to looking at him. "So, what will we do now? If that transport comes and we get out of here, what will we do?"

Jacob thought for a while. "Iâ€¦ Don't quite know." He had been thinking about this himself for some time. How would the UNSC react to them being in the state they're in? How would the Sangheili Covenant react? There was so much for them to consider before going diving into thingsâ€¦ But then again Jacob was never one for considering things.

"Do you think we will be in trouble? Do you thinkâ€¦" she paused. "Do you think we will be allowed to stay together?"

Jacob looked down at the floor beside him, smeared in Cerberus' blood. "Wellâ€¦ I'm not sure. It'll take a lot of convincing, but I'm sure we can probably work something outâ€¦" he looked back to Shay'est, tears welling in her eyes. "Looks like you're going to have to pack your things and move here. I'm not sure I'd be able to breathe on your planetâ€¦" he joked.

Shay'est glossed over while she thought about it; moving to earth to

live with Jacob. Would she be able to do that? Sure she could breathe on this planet, but could she fit in with society here? Shay'est looked down to Jacob again, taking him in. She decided that if he could do so much to ensure her safety, then the least she could do was stay by his side. "I believe you may be right." She smiled.

"_Jacob, you read?"_ his helmet went off beside him. He picked it up and put it on.

"Go ahead."

It was David on the radio. _"The fleet left a ship in the sector for stragglers. Turns out we weren't the only ones left down here. They don't have a whole lot of pelican transports spare but they're sending one our way now. We're coming down to join you guys. HUA?"_

The first good news he had heard all day. "HUA." Jacob confirmed. "See you soon."

He removed his helmet and took in another breath of fresh air.

"Huah?" Shay'est asked, tilting her head to one side, like a curious puppy.

"It's a military term. It stands for 'heard, understood, acknowledged.' Means we got our orders and we're following them." He smiled. There's going to be a lot to teach Shay'est about their culture, about fitting in and whatnot. But Jacob was sure he could make it happen.

* * *

><p>Hey readers!<p>

I apologise for my long absence. I have felt pretty bad about not uploading any content for a while, but the fact of the matter is I just haven't found any time to sit down and write until just now. Life's been really brutal lately so I hope you'll find it in yourselves to forgive me.

That being said, I hope you really enjoyed the latest chapter! The story's coming to a close and I again want to thank everyone who has been reading the story and making this possible. If EME didn't get the support that it has gotten from all of you over the years I would have stopped writing a looong time ago. So thanks. Many of you have gone above and beyond for me and the story, and you know who you are. A special thank you to those people.

Anyway, I've got some other stuff I have to get onto so I'm leaving this here.

>Remember to review the story! I still read every single review I get and every PM so please let me see your feedback!<p>

See ya guys.

>- Nick<p>

67. Chapter 67

****67.****

****Location: New Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa, EARTH.**

>Timestamp: October 23rd**** 2552. 18:20hours.****

**>Unit ID: Lieutenant Jacob Matthews (Male, 25, 5'11"),
Orbital Drop Shock Trooper, 7**th**** Shock Troopers
Battalion.****

Jacob's chest hurt with each breath he took in, but it didn't bother him. A few broken ribs weren't going to stop him from enjoying each and every breath he took. He was glad to be alive. He looked up to see Shay'est observing the mess he had made of Cerberus. She looked down at him and simply asked, "How?"

"He looked hungry so I served him a frag grenade." He started to laugh but it put pressure on his ribs so he stopped. "He popped like a balloon. I wasn't expecting such a mess but the method worked in the endâ€|" he joined her in staring at his remains.

Shay'est giggled to herself and looked back toward the lift doors, waiting for the others to join them. The sooner they got out of here, the better; Thel needed medical attention, and god knows what else wanted to come and greet them before they leave.

Soon enough, the lift doors hissed half open, and David's voice could be heard, "Bloodyâ€|" he pushed as hard as he could against the doors, attempting to pull them the rest of the way open. After he got nowhere with it, Thel'Watamee stepped in, pushing the doors aside in no time at all and came limping out toward Jacob and Shay'est, being supported by Courtney so he could move properly without collapsing.

"You look like hell." Jacob said, chuckling and gripping his chest in the spot where the pain raced from.

"_You_ look like hell." Thel'Watamee returned, being propped up against the wall by Courtney. The two of them shared a look at each other, followed by a nod before Courtney headed back toward the lift to see if Martin needed any help moving any equipment he took from the top of the tower.

Jacob looked up at Shay'est. "Perhaps we're not the only ones who might be bending the rules a little." He said, nodding toward Thel'Watamee and Courtney.

Shay'est twitched her mandibles into a smile. "Perhaps. But I doubt they will not be without troubles."

"Why's that?" Jacob asked, cocking his head to one side, much like Shay'est does when she is curious.

She giggled to herself and raised an arm into the air, making a fist and flexing; indicating that Thel'Watamee's physical endowment may pose an issue for her.

Jacob began to laugh out loud, bellowing in fact. It hurt his ribs something fierce but he didn't care. Just the thought that Shay'est

put into his head had made his afternoon.

"What's so funny?" Martin said with a grunt as he placed a heavy-looking piece of covenant machinery on the ground. Jacob had no idea what the machine was. Martin saw Jacob observing the machine and decided to explain. "It's a-

"Don't care."

"Fair enough." Martin smiled and returned to David.

After a few minutes passed, from between the clouds came a pelican transport ship, soaring through the air, light shining around it like a beacon of hope as it approached the landing pad. When it touched down, marines and air support staff came rushing out to help the injured onto the ship, but being the stubborn soldiers they were, they rejected the help of the air staff. Instead, the air staff turned their attention toward Martin's machinery and began to help lift it on board to strap it down.

The marines lifted their guns and were distrusting toward the Sangheili that were in the group, but they were constantly reassured that they were alright. When they were all loaded into the ship and strapped in, the aircraft lifted off of the platform and began to fly up toward the frigate.

"There are more units down there," David could be heard talking to the pilot. "We'll have to send more craft down to pick up the rest of the stragglers."

"Roger, sir. I'll be sure to inform my CO of that when we arrive back on the ship. You can have a talk with them, as much as I'd like to organize the rescue op myself."

"Understood. Thanks." David stepped back. "Time of arrival?"

"ETA 5 minutes, sir." The pilot replied, flicking the radio on to communicate with the frigate. "UNSC 'Pillar of Hope', this is Pelican Rescue ship #12, returning home. Any free space to pull up?"

A few seconds passed before a static voice came over the radio.

"Roger, Rescue 4, welcome home. Bay 2 is free, we'll send floor crew to help unload."

"Roger, control. We're going to need a medical crew here, some of us are beat up pretty bad." The pilot responded, redirecting the craft toward the frigate's port side.

"Copy, Rescue 4, medical crews have been dispatched, they'll meet you on the floor. Good to have you back." Came the voice back over the radio. Not everyone in the military was cold.

"Good to be back, command. Rescue #4 out." The pilot flicked the switch, turning off the radio.

David came back to join the others. They would pull into the landing bay any minute, and they had to get their story straight as to why they're bringing covenant forces onto their frigate with them. David sat down beside Jacob and nudged his arm with his elbow.

"Hey, "

"What's up, David?" Jacob asked, his eyes closed, feeling like he could finally relax after everything they'd been through.

"Well, I was thinkingâ€¦ What are we going to tell them about Shay'est here and the big guy?" he asked, looking across to Thel'Watamee, who was struggling to fit into the tiny human-sized chair of the pelican, the steel harness that was meant to hold a marine's chest was sitting on top of his head, holding it in place. At least he was trying.

Jacob's eyes flew open and he lifted his head back up. "What do you mean?" his mind raced with the moments they had shared at the hotel together. He turned to David, his face bright red. "What should we tell them?" he began to panic.

David sat in silence looking at Jacob with wide eyes. "I just meantâ€¦ That we should work out how to explain why they're coming back to the ship with us, rather than being _shot at_ by usâ€¦" he cocked an eyebrow. "Why? what did you think I was talking about?" he said, curious at Jacob's overreaction.

Shay'est awkwardly coughed into her hand.

"Um, I dunno. It's all good, we'll just tell them the truthâ€¦" Jacob looked back to Shay'est. "Maybe not the _WHOLE_ truth, but what they need to know."

* * *

><p>Hey ladies and gentlereaders!
Thanks for reading the chapter, and I urge you all to send me reviews as much as you can. I love reading all of the input from my readers. It keeps me motivated. The more reviews I get for my work the more I feel like writing more. (that's why this chapter came out so quickly.)

Thank you all for the support you've given me throughout this journey. I hope you've all enjoyed it half as much as I have.

>Until next time,
- Nick

68. Chapter 68

68.

**Location: Private Debriefing Room 3, UNSC 'Pillar of Hope', UNSC Space.

>Timestamp: October 23**rd**** 2552. 21:15hours.**

>Unit ID: Lieutenant Jacob Matthews (Male, 25, 5'11"), Orbital Drop Shock Trooper, 7**th**** Shock Troopers Battalion.**

The officer sat across the table from Jacob, pulling his metal chair in under the light. "Let's justâ€¦" he said in a calm, but rough military-seasoned voice. "Run through this one more timeâ€¦" he said, adjusting in his chair to make himself comfortable.

"We've been talking about this for an hour, sir." Jacob said, growing impatient. "What is so hard to understand?" sitting forward in his chair and leaning against the table with his hands. The table was littered with documents, medical reports and other images that had been taken while the team was on the ground.

"Well, son." He started. "Why are there elites in my medical bay for starters?"

"They helped us down there and we agreed to help them in return. It is clear that something has gone askew with the covenant and they're as much in the dark as we are, sir." Jacob had a grunt to his voice, but he kept his cool as best he could.

"Corp-" the officer stopped himself. "_Lieutenant_", I want to know why you didn't dispatch them on the ground like you were ordered to do." The officer was reaching the end of his rope, clearly. ODSST marines were trained to be interrogation-proof, so Jacob wasn't about to crack. This brought deep frustration to the debriefing officer.

"Something wasn't right, sir. And our _orders_ were to escort civilians to safety, not start any combat we could find, sir." He looked back down at the documents on the tabletop. "It is clear to me now that there was a separation within their upper ranks that has split their forces in two, one side being the Sangheili covenant and one side being the conquer-driven Brute side." He said, pointing to the documents detailing the separation.

"This is true, there has been a separation within their ranks." The officer looks down toward the documents. "However, now that they are here we need to sort out what we are going to do with them."

"I've told you already, sir." Jacob sat back in his chair, throwing his hands into the air with frustration. "The female would like to be integrated into society, and I have volunteered to be her benefactor and caretaker. Anything that goes wrong to do with her while she's here is my responsibility. The big guy just wants to go home to Sanghelios." Jacob said, running his hands through his hair.

The officer leant back in his chair and thought about what Jacob wanted him to do. "Well, I will discuss it with my commanding officers and bring it forward to the relations officers for the Sangheili; see what they think of it." He sighed and leant forward. "Hopefully this will actually do us some good. We might have a parlay in the works with the Sangheili, but we'll have to wait and see how it all plays out. If this works to our advantage, you'll be a hero, but if it goes wrong you'll be crucified. I hope you understand that, lieutenant." The officer stood up.

Jacob stood up with him, glad to finally be getting out of the small booth. He saluted his commanding officer. "Sir."

"Take it easy, Matthews, you're home for now. Your other team members will be in the mess. We've made sure toâ€¦ Accommodate the Sangheili allies you've brought with you." The CO returned the salute and dismissed Jacob.

After leaving the debriefing room, Jacob was ushered by a security

staff member to turn right to head to the mess hall. The UNSC frigate was by no means a small ship. Jacob took 15 minutes of walking to get to where he wanted to go, saluting commanding personnel along the way. After arriving at the mess hall, he was greeted by two recruits.

"Sir." The one on the left said abruptly, stopping Jacob and taking his attention. "Permission to speak, sir?"

Jacob didn't have people treating him like this before now. "Uh, granted?" he awkwardly replied.

"Sir," the marine started, before turning around and looking at the one table near the centre of the mess hall, which -despite people standing- was surrounded by a buffer zone of empty tables. "About your elite friends, sir. Are they friendly?" he turned back toward Jacob "Are they friendlies, sir?"

Jacob took a moment to look over to the table to see none other than his squad sitting at the marooned table. "Do you see them attacking anyone, private?"

"Sir. Sir, no sir." The marine nervously replied, afraid he had asked a stupid question.

"Granted, the big one is a bit of a prick, but you get used to him." Jacob murmured.

"Sir?"

"Never mind, private. To answer your question, yes. They are friendly. Your friends who are all standing can safely sit in the surrounding seats." Jacob smiled. "Dismissed, private." Walked past the young men.

"Sir." The two marines said in unison.

After walking away, Jacob heard the two talking to one another, saying things like "He's so cool," and "I can't believe he made friends with elites! He's got balls." Jacob couldn't help but smile to himself. They were right in a way to be afraid, it was unheard of to make friends with covenant forces.

Jacob made it to the table with the others and Martin scooted across to make room beside Shay'est for him to sit. He dropped himself into the seat and leant against her shoulder. "Ughh" he moaned to himself.

"Not used to the 'Sir' treatment yet?" David laughed, shovelling another spoonful of baked beans into his mouth. Jacob began to wonder just how much David had eaten while Jacob was in the debriefing.

"No, not yet. I'm not sure I ever will be." He crossed his arms on the table in front of him and plopped his head onto them.

"Well, technically you're only temporarily promoted." Martin started "Before you can be properly promoted to rank of lieutenant there is plenty of paperwork and training for you to go through." He looked down to see Jacob peeking up at him with one eye, unamused.

"Sorry buddy." Martin smiled.

Jacob moaned to himself again. Paperwork; the one thing about the military he hated the most, more than the imminent risk of death on the battlefield.

"Ahh, don't worry buddy!" David said after gulping down another mouthful. "You'll probably go have a meeting with a colonel soon who'll tell you your options. Likely you'll just be bumped back down to staff sergeant." He scooped up more food from his tray.

Jacob looked around to see all the other marines staring anxiously at Thel'Watamee; who was squished and sitting awkwardly in the table seating provided. He did not look comfortable. He didn't exactly blend in.

"Hey, Thel." Jacob got his attention and the two leaned in toward each other. "I think the guys around here are a bit intimidated by you. A bit scared of ya." He winked.

Thel looked around to the other marines, who all looked away as soon as his gaze met theirs. Thel'Watamee was clearly pleased by this.

It would take some work to get everyone used to the idea of Shay'est living amongst themâ€¦ But Jacob would do his best, and he was sure Shay'est would too.

69. Chapter 69

****69.****

****Location:** Matthews Residence, UNSC Lodging Unit 122, South Africa, Earth.

>Timestamp: November 3**rd**** 2552. 9:05 hours.**

>Unit ID: Lieutenant Jacob Matthews (Male, 25, 5'11"), Orbital Drop Shock Trooper, 7**th**** Shock Troopers Battalion (Off Duty).**

"Dear video diary," Jacob started, adjusting his hair in the camera, "Shay'est is still settling in to civilian life here on Earth, but she is doing her best to keep up. She is slowly learning how customs work here, and she even went grocery shopping on her own yesterday."

Jacob leaned back in his chair and turned his head to the photo he had framed on his desk of the two of them together. "Sending these videos over to you guys back at the labs doesn't bother me as much as it did initiallyâ€¦ So that'sâ€¦ Good." Jacob trailed off as he heard the microwave door open in the kitchen. Shay'est was trying her hand at cooking again. "Naturally she is having some struggles still getting used to using our technology, as it is so different from the way things work on Sanghelios, but that's to be expected."

A loud bang sounded from the kitchen followed by a yelp. Jacob rolled his eyes and stood up from his chair, walking at a hasty pace over to the kitchen.

"I am sorry!" Shay'est cried out before Jacob had the chance to see

what she had done. "I did not mean to cause damage, I was only attempting to prepare fast-break."

"Breakfast." Jacob corrected. He looked to his right to find his microwave fried, a small amount of smoke escaping from the cracked door. He cocked an eyebrow before slowly pulling the door open. Inside sat an external hard drive for a computer. "Iâ€|" He thought for a few moments. "Why?" he turned back to Shay'est.

"Well, I checked to see what was on it on your computer, and the computer said that it contained dairy, so I attempted to create cereal." Shay'est desperately explained.

"Dâ€| Those were DIARY entries! Not dairy! Those were for the eggheads back at UNSCâ€|" Jacob placed his face in his palms. He had already sent the files back to them, but he wanted to keep personal copies.

"I am sorry." She rubbed a hand up and down his right arm. "I could try to prepare fast-break again for both of us?"

Jacob laughed into his hands. "Breakfast." He corrected again. "No, it's alright, I'll make something for us. I just have to go turn something off in the study first. Be right back." He said, giving her a peck on the forehead and returning to the other room. The camera caught him running his fingers through his hair rigorously before leaning back over the desk, into the camera's shot.

"So, after recent developments the personal copies I had kept of the video logs have been destroyed. Sorry eggheads, you'll have to make do with what you have. Jacob Matthews signing off." He said, pressing the stop button and letting his computer render the video. Jacob stood back up and stretched. He would have to go buy a new hard drive to replace that one.

A knock sounded from the front door. Shay'est called out "I will get it!" but Jacob wanted to be sure it wasn't some dumb neighbourhood kids playing a prank because they knew Shay'est lived there. Children can be so hateful. Jacob rounded the corner, hearing Shay'est answer the door. After she greeted the person at the front door however, there was silence. Jacob looked around the corner curiously, wondering who was there.

"Good morningâ€| Umâ€| Ma'am?" the figure at the door said, in a deep and authoritative, albeit concerned and lost voice. He was clearly military. "This is the residence of one Lieutenant Jacob Matthews, correct?"

Shay'est kept her eyes on the man, but called out behind her for Jacob. He was already close behind her however. He stepped around Shay'est, placing his left hand on her right shoulder to reassure her it was alright. Jacob looked the man up and down. He was an older gentleman, black hair but slightly greying, aged skin, wearing a black military uniform. Formal attire considering he was visiting a residential area. Jacob also noticed the man's brigadier badge on his chest and shoulders.

Jacob immediately offered a salute out of drilled in military habit. "Sir, may I help you, sir?"

The old man chuckled. "No need for formalities, son. I'm in uniform, but only because I was informed to do so." The man smiled. "I'm brigadier Sean MacArthur. I'm here to make you an offer on behalf of the UNSC."

Jacob invited the man in and offered him tea, coffee, water; all of which the man respectfully turned down. They sat around Jacob's dining table to discuss what he was here for. Despite the fact that the marines weren't home for much of their military career, home life in the UNSC was surprisingly cushy.

"Son I'll get right to the point." The man said, placing his white marines issued hat on the table in front of him. "The UNSC would like to offer you a place in the Spartan Training Program." He said with a stern tone. "The reason I am here offering you this is because you would be operating in a fireteam that is to be led by myself. We realize that you are above the recommended age gap for joining up with the program, but my commanding Major General would like to make an exception for you due to your recent performance in the field." He adjusted his hat on the table so it sat perfectly straight. Jacob could tell this man had been in the military for some time before becoming an officer, as that kind of behaviour was typical of marines. "Ultimately, son, the choice is up to you, and you alone to make." He looked back up at Jacob with a smile. "However, should you choose to accept, you will be shipped out next week. Little time to prepare for such a situation, I know, but that is how the higher ups have chosen to play this. I should also inform you that should you decline, this chance will not come up again." The man's tone changed to a more serious one.

Jacob looked to Shay'est, who was finding it difficult to follow on with the situation. "So," Jacob started, but didn't need to finish his question.

"Arrangements will be made immediately for the Sangheili resident's well-being. The UNSC has opted to assign carers for her and escorts should the need be felt. I assume that normally she travels with you, meaning she would be safe from anything this planet has to offer." The man joked, attempting to lighten the mood.

Jacob kept eye contact with Shay'est. "This man is a Brigadier General with the UNSC." Jacob began to explain. "He is here offering me a place in the Spartan program, which is a very prestigious offer, and not one that is commonly handed out. The trouble is that I would have to leave soon, and I wouldn't see you for a long time." Jacob frowned.

Shay'est nodded, understandingly. "Do you want it?"

Jacob thought for a moment. There was a small part of him that would feel terrible about taking the offer, but also a large part of him that reached out for it in desperation. "I do want it."

"Then take it." Shay'est smiled. "This is an honour to receive from the UNSC, is it not?"

"It's a long time away from you for a long time." Jacob again stressed the point.

"We could keep in contact through the computer, could we not?"

Shay'est pointed to Jacob's desk, where he had previously been recording a video diary for the Sangheili Relations wing back at the local UNSC offices.

Jacob turned back toward the Brigadier General, who was still waiting patiently. "If I agree, I would like a computer terminal in my quarters and time allocated to contact Shay'est at least 3 times a week, while on station." He said sternly.

Sean MacArthur looked Jacob's face up and down, considering the deal for a few moments. "Well," he started with a smile. "I look forward to working with you, son. Welcome back to your service." He stood up, ready to leave.

Jacob and the man saluted each other before they moved to the door. When at the door, the man turned back to face him. "I promise you will not regret this decision. I will inform my commanding officer and we will have support teams over to check on the well-being of your companion frequently." They nodded to each other, before the man turned to leave.

Jacob slowly closed the door, and turned back to face Shay'est. They had little time to spend together. Only a week. So he had to make sure she would be ready to live on her own in that time. But he also had to make the most of the time they had left together before his redeployment. He stepped toward her and wrapped his arms around her, embracing her in a hug.

"Why did you let me do that?" he asked. "I'll not see you for a long time."

"This is true," she started, before pulling him away from her. "But it also makes the time we have together now more special." She smiled. Jacob smiled back and pulled her close again. She was right. It was time to make the most of what they had left.

* * *

><p>Ladies and Gentlemen, here it is. The end of the story.
I was sure to make this an extra long chapter just for the big finale.

Thank you for reading along for such a long ride. I know that my chapters have been few and far between as I went along, but hopefully it was all worth it in the end.

>I want everyone to know that I do still read every review and enjoy looking back at everything everyone has said. Its been quite a journey and I'm super thankful you've all been here for it.<p>

There are a few of you who I have been in personal contact with, (you know who you are ;)) and I want to say thank you for your undying support and help throughout this long story. You guys really kept me going through it all.

If anyone wants to send me private messages asking me any questions, feel free to do so. I promise I'll try to get back to you.

Anyway, all that being said, thank you all for reading. Remember to review, as always. I look forward to reading what everyone has to say!

Thanks again to all of you. I am truly blessed to have such a reader base.
>~ Nick<p>

End
file.